

# The Nation

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## CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE
EVENTS OF THE WEEK ...	53	Men and Women of Letters, Seven Members of Parliament, and Others ...	66
POLITICS AND AFFAIRS:—		The Proposed Changes in the Prussian Constitution. By Democrat ...	70
"The Nation's" Real Offence ...	56	Edward Thomas. By Henry W. Nevins ...	70
The Great Offensive in the West ...	57	POETRY:—	
America's Contribution to the World's Salvation ...	58	Killed in Action. By W. H. Davies ...	70
The Choice in Education ...	59	THE WORLD OF BOOKS. By Penguin ...	72
A LONDON DIARY. By A Wayfarer ...	60	REVIEWS:—	
LIFE AND LETTERS:—		Alfred Lyttelton ...	74
"Instans Tyrannus" ...	61	The New Spirit in Germany ...	76
Journey's End ...	62	Samples ...	78
MR. CHURCHILL ON THE INTERDICT ...	64	THE WEEK IN THE CITY. By Lucellum ...	78
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:—			
"The Nation" and the Censorship. By Thirty-nine			

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## Events of the Week.

It needs little imagination to read a decisive character into the present events of the war. There is little trace of action outside of France except on the fringes of the struggle above Baghdad. But it is reported that the enemy is burning Braila and Focșani, and unless this means a withdrawal, it is difficult to discover what it means. The events in the West, the sweeping away of the Vimy Ridge defences, the advance into the suburbs of St. Quentin, the accentuation of the Laon salient, and the great, and perhaps critical, French advance in Champagne, must attract reserves from Germany or from the other fronts. However feasible the weakening of the Russian front may seem to civilians, it cannot be so considered by the German Staff, and if they should be driven to this expedient, it may not be long before they have an unwelcome shock. The season is not yet suitable for major operations on the Russian front, but in about a month it will be. The German difficulty in the West is that *moral* will fail if a retreat is attempted under pressure, whereas the alternative is to lose more men and be worse off in the end.

THE British offensive between the Arras-Cambrai road and Loos was developed last week-end. Bailleul, Willerval, Vimy, Givenchy-en-Gohelle, and Angres were all captured on Friday. They were fortified villages, but they fell with the loss of prisoners and guns. And an even more significant extension of the offensive was the thrust north-east of Lens. Lievin fell on the following day, with a number of guns, much ammunition, mortars, bombs, grenades, tools, and engineering material. With great promptness the British turned the guns on to the Germans, and treated them to their own newest gas

shells. The extent of the advance in this area was such that the troops were at some points less than a mile from the outer houses of Lens, in which fires were seen to be burning. Lens was made untenable any longer as an advanced base, and there can be no doubt that it is being hurriedly evacuated. The British line was carried eastward and north-eastward from two to three miles from the Vimy Ridge. The great stores of material captured are ample testimony to the unpreparedness of the Germans for so complete a reverse. And the final result is that our troops are on the outskirts of Lens.

FARTHER south events of no less importance have taken place, and it is impossible to ignore the fact that the German positions are in jeopardy. The advance towards Cambrai and St. Quentin has been developed considerably, and the Germans have suffered heavy loss in attempting to check it. At Monchy-le-Preux, just above the Arras-Cambrai road, the 3rd Bavarian Division was terribly cut up. After another German counter-attack astride the Bapaume-Cambrai road, 1,500 German dead were found in front of our position. During the night of Friday (13th) the British captured Fayet, and further progress on the following day carried them to the outskirts of St. Quentin. The French are in the southern suburbs, and the position cannot be maintained much longer except at a prohibitive price. It is necessary to realize, as we have frequently insisted, that it is finally *men* who hold or lose positions, and hence St. Quentin and Lens may be held for some time. This is all to our advantage. On the British section of the front there has been hard fighting during the whole week, and the Germans have suffered heavy loss. The number of prisoners captured since the opening of the Battle of Vimy Ridge is nearly 15,000, and a great quantity of guns of all calibres have also been taken.

THE whole of the line from Lens to St. Quentin is agitated by almost continual fighting. On Monday our Allies added a new important or essential extension to the battle-front. For five days there had been a violent bombardment across the country between Soissons and the Argonne. On Sunday night it reached its maximum intensity between Soissons and Reims, and on the following morning the French attacked on a front of 25 miles. The Germans had been expecting attack there, and at once a struggle of the most violent character began. The first entrenched system was carried from Soissons to Craonne, and from Craonne to Reims the second also fell. The French line was pressed forward to Bermericourt and to the Aisne Canal between Loivre and Coucy. Much material was captured, and over 10,000 prisoners. But the Craonne plateau has not yet been won, though the German line has been dented so as to form an accentuated salient to the south-west of Laon. The Germans delivered a number of counter-attacks between Troyon and Craonne, and further to the east. Great numbers were used in these engagements; but the assaults were repulsed, or the ground lost was recovered by French counter-attacks. And another 1,000 prisoners were

added on Tuesday. But on this day the struggle was extended by another great French attack east of Reims.

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THE bombardment had continued during Monday over this area, which added about 12½ miles to the battle front, from Prunay, south-east of Reims, to the St. Hilaire-St. Souplet road. For ten miles of this front the first German system was carried, and on seven miles of it the line was pushed forward to include the second system. A considerable amount of material was taken, and over 2,500 prisoners. Thus on this day the French were fighting on a new front of nearly forty miles over one of the most difficult pieces of country in France. East of Reims there were nuclei of fortified heights; west of the city there was that extraordinary terrain which held up the British in their recoil from the Marne. And wet weather had set in, as the French tried to work up the rising ground which a century ago caused such losses to Napoleon's troops. Between Vailly and Condé, the bridgehead which we attempted to take two years ago, was carried, and on Wednesday the success was developed considerably about the tip of the salient. Cavalry were even employed here, and the Germans at one spot seem to have fallen back in disorder. Our Ally has gained 14,000 prisoners and much material.

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BUT there are not three or four battles. There is but one, and it covers a vast front. It is comparable alone with the Battle of the Marne, which conditioned all the subsequent acts in the war. This battle will probably be decisive to that extent at least. The French have begun to move as though they were prepared to continue; and that is presumably how events will develop. For we are not confronted with an episode, but with the great episode of the war. The British have shown their superiority to the best German troops. The stormy petrels of the enemy—the Bavarians and the Prussian Guard—have been flung into the struggle, and that can only mean that the Staff appreciated the moment as critical. We cannot expect to see a decision in a moment, but never have the Allies looked so much like securing one as they do now. We must not be misled by the fact that great distances are not at once covered by the Allied Armies. The struggle aims at putting the enemy's army out of action, and if that were achieved, all the rest would follow.

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THE man whom his critics used to describe as a typical professor, is giving a wonderful example of leadership to the world in arms. Mr. Wilson's appeal for war service, disinterestedness, and economy, addressed to the American nation, is exactly the practical, homely, and yet elevated call to work which we missed in this country in the early years of this war. It opens with the reminder that there is not "a single selfish element" in America's battle for "democracy and human rights," and calls, therefore, for service "without regard to profit or material advantage"—a point very well taken by Lord Crewe in the debate on the American address. Americans must act as "the efficient friends and saviors of free men everywhere." Very clearly and very simply the nature of the task is outlined—the building of ships, and the supply of everything with which the European nations at war have usually supplied themselves. The chief stress is laid on the provision of food, for there will be dearth even when war ends. The South is exhorted to grow food as well as cotton, in spite of the tempting price of the latter. Middlemen are exhorted to avoid "profiteering," and the pledge is given that the United States will show itself an "efficient democracy," and will know how to deal with selfish manipulators of the food supply. The foresight, the simplicity, the confidence, and the generous tone of this document are worthy of a great democracy under a great leader.

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ON Tuesday night, a sharp interrogation, conducted by many members of Parliament, forced the Government to reveal some of the causes and methods of its suppression of the overseas sale of THE NATION. Mr. Pringle elicited the statement that the offending articles were

military, not political (Mr. George insinuated that they were both), that they appeared in our issues of March 3rd and March 10th, and that they were of a nature to help the enemy, and had been used by him for propagandist purposes. Further pressed, Mr. Law declared that if articles in other papers were so used they would be similarly treated. The answer to this evasion is that hundreds of articles have been so used, and that the papers publishing them have *not* been so treated. Answering Mr. Churchill, Mr. Law declined to specify the character of the offence or to quote the articles which contained it. The heckling continued, amid rising and almost universal indignation, and ended in a demand for a motion of adjournment, supported by at least two-thirds of the members in the House.

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MR. PRINGLE supported his motion in a speech of great argumentative force and equal moderation. The incriminated article dealt, he said, with the German retreat. He showed that THE NATION's general view of the method of this operation was common to the "Observer" and the "Times," but that in expression and feeling it lagged far behind the description by the Prime Minister, "that dispenser of pessimism," of the Russian retreat of 1915. Mr. George's reply rode off on a different issue. It was largely a rhetorical attempt to associate THE NATION with what the "Times" calls peace-mongering. He attacked the proprietors of the paper, quoting and re-quoting a single phrase in the article, that the soldiers had been found wanting, and fastening upon it the false interpretation that it criticized the conduct of the rank and file rather than the alertness of the Staff. This gross misrepresentation was too much even for Sir Henry Dalziel, a close friend and supporter of the Prime Minister, who repudiated it as "unfair," declaring that the obvious meaning of THE NATION article was that the German retreat had taken us by surprise. But the effect of Mr. George's speech was largely neutralized by his admission that he knew nothing of the prohibition till he read it in the "Times," and that his excuse for it was therefore *ex post facto*.

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THE following debate went wholly against the Government, which failed to enlist a single supporter. Mr. Churchill, in a brilliant speech, which we re-print in another column, ridiculed the notion that the incriminated article was alarmist or dangerous, or that it was likely to encourage the enemy or discourage our own Army. He recalled the George of the old pro-Boer days, with his manly contempt for the charge of "encouraging" the enemy which he had now fastened on THE NATION, and asked him whether he thought that the Army, which had gone from triumph to triumph, was really suffering from depression. Mr. Samuel, as an ex-Home Secretary, insisted that he would not have prohibited the foreign sale of THE NATION. The two most notable following speeches, those of Mr. Wedgwood and Mr. Hemmerde, both strong Imperialists, attacked the Government's action with uncompromising vigor. Mr. Wedgwood declared that the prohibition would have the worst effect in America, where the intellectuals mainly read the "Manchester Guardian" and THE NATION, and Mr. Hemmerde gave the same report about Russia, where a similar practice prevailed. Mr. Bonar Law changed the Government's ground again by suggesting that THE NATION was prohibited because it assumed that the war could not be won. The motion was talked out by Mr. Macallum Scott, and the Government saved from a bad division. The debate left the real motive and method of the War Office ukase obscure, and on that point we recommend a remarkable article in the current number of "Truth."

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ON Monday the Admiralty announced that, as a reprisal for the German attack on British hospitals, "in flagrant contravention" of the Hague Convention, a large squadron of British and French aeroplanes bombarded "with good results," the famous university town of Freiburg. The Germans record the fruits of this

enterprise in the deaths of several women and children. Sir Edward Carson has thus inaugurated, after a warning by the Foreign Office, the policy of reprisals for outrage, which two British Governments have resisted all through the war. The provocation was the grossest act of inhumanity of which even Germany has been guilty. The sinking of hospital ships, full or empty, is a policy published by her as a method of her warfare and a token of her shame. We have now chosen to deprive our statesmen and publicists of the retort that she alone made war on women and children, which properly lay on their lips all through the vile episodes of the Zeppelin raids. We see no sense in thus extending the war on innocence, and certainly no advantage of arms.

MR. FISHER, the new Minister of Education, introduced his estimates on Thursday in a speech of noble enthusiasm for his task and wide comprehension of it. We must reserve criticism of his proposals, but we are afraid they are hardly adequate to the hour or to his conception of its need. He proposes an additional grant of £3,450,000 for elementary education, and of £433,900 for secondary education (the latter a very small addition), the raising of the school age to 14, the raising of the standards of pay for teachers, and a large scheme of higher and special education. We hope the Minister will be encouraged on all hands to expand this promising but not sufficient programme.

THE semi-official rumors from the German side of a coming peace move have their confirmation in the issue of a rather curious Note addressed by the Austrian to the Russian Government. We are not sure whether the summary of it, or the gloss upon it, published by the Austrian official agency, purports to be the whole or any part of its text. As it stands, it is a suggestion to the effect that since the Russian Provisional Government has disavowed all designs of conquest and annexation, it really is at one with the Austrian Government, and there is no adequate reason for the continuance of the war. It expresses good will to the new Russia, and promises it "security and contentment," but the published version (which probably is rather a commentary than the actual text) makes no mention of terms. This move was generally treated by our Press as an overture for a separate peace. This is not quite clear. The statement mentioned Austria's allies, but said nothing about Russia's. Austria may be aiming at a separate peace, but she may also have been detached by the Central Group to get into touch with the Entente through Russia, the aim being a general peace. It is quite clear that what the German Socialists have been proposing to the Russian Socialists is a general peace, for the terms divulged by a Russian Socialist in Denmark began with the independence of Belgium and the evacuation of France.

THE urgency of the popular demand for peace in Germany was illustrated this week by a brief general strike on Sunday, followed by rioting in Berlin and Leipzig. The news issued by the official German wireless service is remarkably candid—so candid, indeed, that one asks whether the real facts are even more serious, or whether the German Government has an object in advertising the discontent of the population. Huge processions of workmen from all the factories were formed, which penetrated into the centre of the city. The police was evidently mild at first, but suburban meetings in the evening led to renewed processions and marches, and these were opposed by the police with swords. There was "stubborn fighting" with a "large number of wounded," and at several points the police lines were broken. Much the same thing happened in Leipzig. The Majority Socialists have denounced the strike as unpatriotic. "Vorwärts" analyzes its causes as (1) discontent over the new bread ration; (2) the desire for political reform without delay, inspired by the Russian example; and (3) "the deep longing for peace." The Government is in the mood

to make concessions, and has ordered that two trade unionists be placed on all city food control committees. The Junkers are evidently alarmed by this spirit of concession, and Count Reventlow even declares that a peace without victory would be fatal to the dynasty.

A HOUSE OF COMMONS luncheon, on Wednesday, to the Japanese delegates who are to attend the coming Economic Conference at Rome, was of interest, chiefly because it serves to remind us that a trade "war after peace" is still the official policy of the Allies. There has been little or no mention of this Rome Conference in the Press, but apparently it is intended to carry the strategy devised at Paris a stage further. So the Japanese Ambassador stated, and he went on to dwell on the probability that "after the conclusion of the present war, there might be another war of an entirely different character—a war of commerce." In Ministerial speeches, and in messages to America, we are invariably told that we are fighting for an enduring peace, and that this must be the last war. But other Ministerial orators are preparing another war—a war of commerce. This means, of course, that any League of Nations will be impossible, and only a simpleton supposes that a war of boycotts can fail to promote a parallel competition in armaments, and eventually another war of flesh and blood. It is not for this that America came in and Russia made her revolution; nor is it for this that the British and French democracies have sacrificed their youth.

ARE the fundamental principles which were at stake in the long and ultimately successful struggle against Leopoldianism in the Congo again threatened, this time by a powerful combination of British capitalistic interests, supported by representatives of British Labor? The question is forced upon the public by the circulars and prospectuses of the Empire Resources Development Committee. The Committee is said to have been formed to advocate the direct exploitation by the British State of the natural resources of the Empire, with the object of helping to pay off the War Loans. The first item on the Committee's programme is State control of the "production of vegetable oils and fats raised in the tropical possessions of the Crown." A Board of Imperial development is to be formed, and the management to proceed "on the lines of the large Joint-Stock Corporations." The Board is either to buy out "all existing interests for cash," or to employ individuals or corporations "already engaged in the business, under such conditions as would assure to them a prosperous future, while securing for the State ownership and control." The Board would ensure that a dividend of at least 10 per cent. would be paid upon the capital invested. Now, the chief natural reserve of vegetable oils in the Empire is to be found in British tropical Africa, and especially West Africa, the home of the famous oil-palm of commerce. An explanatory leaflet sent out with the official circulars, and a recent lecture delivered before the Royal Society of Arts by the Secretary of the Committee, remove any doubts as to the true inwardness of the project. The lands of the native races and the product of the oil-palms are to be vested in the British State. Apparently, also, native labor is to be used for their exploitation, the State and the bond-holders sharing the profits.

In other words, this scheme, which is to be pressed upon the Government, proposes, in effect, to put back the clock three hundred years and to embark upon the policy which first degraded, and then ruined, the colonial empire of Spain. It is an application to British tropical Africa of the general principles which formed the juridical basis of the policy inaugurated by Leopold II. on the Congo. In normal times such a proposition would only need to be advanced to receive general condemnation. To-day it makes its appearance under the avowed *agis* of a Cabinet Minister, and is obviously supported by great financial interests. The Rhodesian influence is conspicuously in evidence.

## Politics and Affairs.

### "THE NATION'S" REAL OFFENCE.

WE do not know that we need add anything to the verdict which the Parliament and the Press of these islands have passed on the Government's interdict of the overseas circulation of THE NATION. So far as the Press is concerned, the censure is unanimous; and the same may be said of the House of Commons in its capacity as a free representative of public opinion. Save on the Ministerial bench, not one voice, Liberal, Labor, Tory, or Nationalist, was raised on Wednesday night in defence of the blow which the War Office has struck at the freedom of the Press. Whatever authority it possesses, it evidently lacks the authority of Parliament. No vote, indeed, was taken, and the reason was clear. The issue of liberty was felt to be interwoven with the conduct of the war and the defeat of the Government to carry larger consequences than their own destruction. But the silence of one party and the speech of another told their own tale. The Government could not be defended, for they offered no defence worthy the name. The Prime Minister's speech contained, indeed, two points of prejudice. The first was a falsification of a single phrase in an article of military criticism, which was exposed by one of his closest friends and adherents; the second was a caricature of the policy of this paper, coupled with a personal attack on a family at whose hands he has received uncounted benefits. The case thus imperfectly disclosed was never communicated to the proprietors or the Editor of THE NATION. Up to the moment of Mr. Pringle's interrogations, the conductors of THE NATION only knew by hearsay the cause of the offence it had given to the War Office. It is even now obscure. An article in our issue of March 3rd has been impugned. But there has been no specification of the sins committed in the number of March 10th, though Mr. Bonar Law associated it with the penalty. Neither of these papers was prohibited, but only the issue of April 7th and the following number, all of them appearing long after the operations criticized were over and done with. We know little more of the features of our executioner than of the nature of our crime. Mr. Law declared that the matter had been considered by the Government; Mr. George that he never heard of it till he saw the editor's letter of announcement in the "Times." Mr. George and Mr. Law declared that the Foreign Office joined the War Office in advising the prohibition. The "Daily Chronicle" stated on authority that the Foreign Office knew no more of the matter before it was consummated than the Prime Minister himself. He, again, refers us to the Headquarters in France; and we, in our turn, will take leave to suggest that the egg (after due incubation in the columns of the "Times") was finally hatched in the nest of reactionary bureaucrats who surround and direct him.

What, indeed, was the crime of THE NATION so far as the Prime Minister's speech revealed it? Improper disclosure of facts? No. A thousand such secrets, great and small, pass through an editor's room in the course of such a war as this. The Prime Minister, with all the will in the world, could not charge us with the communication of one of them. The offence was one of opinion. THE NATION had "discouraged" the Army (the War Office merely suggested by inference that it had "encouraged" the Germans) by criticizing in a

single argumentative article, and in terms of great moderation, the method of our Staff in handling the German retreat. We claim AN ABSOLUTE RIGHT TO SUCH CRITICISM, a right exercised by every journal in this country, and in no way dependent on German use or abuse of its views or expression. Once admit such a qualification, and, as Sir Henry Dalziel well said, the censorship of the British Press is transferred from London to Berlin. So far as THE NATION's criticism is concerned, it has consistently aimed at realizing the only value of such work, namely, an objective statement of the facts and tendencies of the war, and of its characteristic incidents and plans. Not only do we refuse to stand at the bar to defend such an attitude; we declare it to be the most important "national service" that the country can demand of honest and informed minds in it. Mr. George thought to confuse the issue by the gross suggestion that the article reflected on the courage and conduct of our soldiers. Its untruthfulness would have been evident had the Prime Minister read the preceding sentence in which the writer argued for a change in the "method of handling the situation." Of that change the ensuing Battle of Arras was the brilliant fruit, and no journal in Great Britain appraised it more warmly than THE NATION. Our argument was that the German retreat had come upon us as a surprise, and that careful measure must be taken of the military consequences of the successful withdrawal of a great army from a long line of positions without the loss of prisoners or guns. In Mr. George's opinion, this statement (which happened to be the truth) had encouraged the enemy. Therefore he must be deprived of the moral solace that he might derive from the succeeding numbers of THE NATION in which a great British victory was described in terms fully commensurate with its importance. But this is not the only dark spot in the generally illuminated mind of the War Office. Presumably, the number of THE NATION which "encouraged" the Germans also "discouraged" our people at home. Why, then, was not this debilitating poison denied to them by the same edict as snatched the comforting honey from the lips of the Hun?

Now, it is only by a process of moral enfeeblement that the suppression of such criticism can be adjudged to be a service to the country. We suppose that no journal of any complexion has, on the whole, maintained a more steadily optimistic view of the military position in the West. Mr. George said that our treatment of the war was that it ought to stop, because, in a military sense, it could not be won. That is not true. The substantial view of this paper has been that the general military scheme of the German Staff crumbled long ago, and could not be set up again. Our military critic has insisted times out of number on the power of the Allied Armies to break the German line. The editor, as the result of his visit to the front, expressed the same conclusion. A score of such articles of appreciation and encouragement have appeared in THE NATION, and Sir Douglas Haig must be well aware of them. The twenty-first happened to strike a note of caution and doubt, not on strategy but on tactics. The paper is promptly suppressed. Is, then, the infallibility of our Staff secured by the process of assuming that it exists, and assuring our generals, as this edict assures them, complete immunity from criticism? The nation does not exist for the Army but the Army for the nation, and the commander who, in effect, demands from the Press either silence or praise deprives the country of the power to discover and repair in time any error of judgment he may commit.

But we are justified in brushing aside the tangle of contradictory excuses for the ban on the export of this paper, and treating it for what it is, an effort of the bureaucracy to rule Liberal opinion out of the war and the peace. We do not speak of the armies in the field; we have ample evidence for our belief that THE NATION is far nearer the Army's view of the war than the War Cabinet's. But we have no doubt that the War Offices of Europe would like to wave off the independent thinker. The soldier-official is not allowed to be a moralist, a speculator in the humanities. It is no business of his to lament our disordered civism, or to re-settle a distracted society. The whole responsibility is with the statesmen, and it is they to whom we must look to welcome and hasten a revival of the world's Will to Live. Mr. George may choose to caricature any view of the war which discredits his own light-minded dalliance with it. But the Liberalism which made him, and which he has deserted, is not thereby absolved from asking itself afresh what is its duty and message to society. It has seen no reason to revise its general view of the origins of the war. The world has known no greater enemy of rationality and concord than the force, half-savage, half-civilized, that loosed this plague upon it. But it is the special business of the progressive politician to probe and understand the underlying character of the struggle. The war is no quarrel of brutes, as the Prime Minister once told us. It is something more and worse than an absurd misdirection of man's energies. It is a profound division and disturbance of his society, and unless he can quell it, it will destroy him. This journal has endeavored, without the smallest prejudice to our country's effort of resistance to German aggression, to hasten her return to the normal rule of peace, the rule that men live by. It conceives it to be no crime to wish and strive for the most desired and desirable thing in the world, and to state that desire in the terms in which the world's best political thought has defined it. That is the offence of THE NATION, and there is no other. The "Times" accuses us of being a peace-mongering organ; does not a far heavier weight of responsibility rest on a war-mongering organ? It is not a question of peace to-day or peace to-morrow, but of its character and intention. THE NATION has affirmed the aim of international security and repelled the idea of national conquest, in language merely amplifying and underlining the more general aspirations of Mr. Wilson, Mr. Asquith, and Lord Grey. But it could never be sure where the policy of the Government lay, or whether, indeed, it had any policy at all. Mr. George defined this attitude as a search for a patched-up peace. It is, on the contrary, a quest for the true end of the war. That point, again, is essentially spiritual, not material. It comes into view when, as the result of the resistless pressure which the world of democracy is bringing to bear on her, Germany has learned her lesson, and undergone a purification of her perverted mind and will. But we, too, have a choice to make. A struggle for the soul of England is also going on, concealed beneath the antagonisms of the physical struggle. We must examine our own consciousness, and ascertain whether a katharsis of the German character and its political idea and method is our true objective, or a mere re-distribution, in our interest, of the mechanical forces of Europe and of the world's territory and material resources; whether, in a word, the heavily scourged peoples are to gain from this conflict, as its one guerdon, any release from the burden of armaments and the fear and curse of war.

### THE GREAT OFFENSIVE IN THE WEST.

WHEN Hindenburg began to meditate his great retreat in the West it is clear that the first objects of his solicitude were the flanks which should cover his manœuvring armies. Whether his intention was a mere retirement or a retreat preparatory to an offensive, his flanks were bound to form a special preoccupation. His control of the retreat depended upon the inviolability of the flanks upon which it pivoted, and if he wished to strike, they again were his lure. In reflecting upon these facts it is impossible to ignore the extraordinary confidence they imply on the part of the German command. For clearly the assumptions which conditioned them were all founded upon a further assumption that they would be able to seize and retain the initiative.

Early in the development of the retreat the Allies gave proof that they meant to seize control of the situation, and last week came the first attack on one of the flanks. The Battle of Vimy Ridge deserves serious study. The attack was expected, but it achieved a success such as has not fallen to our arms in any battle of the war. Circumscribed in its scope, it was most skilfully fought. We have reason to know that the enemy losses were extremely heavy, and that our own were moderate, while the completeness of the victory can be measured by the great capture of German guns. Yet in itself the battle seems to have been no more than the first act of a great drama. The engagement spread like a fire in inflammable material; but at first it spread northwards. The ridge ceased to be the key of the position; Lens took its place. At the moment this town is encircled, and must soon fall. The struggle spread southwards, hovered about and below Cambrai, and involved the area about St. Quentin and La Fère. More recently it fired the left flank of the German retreat from Soissons to Reims, and then extended to Auberive. We are faced with the great Allied offensive. Comparatively small and detached actions have been linked up and worked into the fabric of a mighty struggle extending over a line of about 130 miles from Loos to Auberive.

The section of the battle which extends from Soissons to Auberive is more tense with struggling armies than any other part of the battle front. There has been no concealment that the Germans expected this attack, and expected it with misgiving. They appreciated the fact that Laon is in many respects the most sensitive point of the line upon which they stand. An attack from the south, despite the advantages held by the Germans in the terrain, would be extremely hard to meet, and, if successful, might compel a difficult evacuation. In this we can find the explanation of the long and apparently aimless warfare about Maisons de Champagne. If the French were to strike north towards the east of Laon, clearly a weakening of the French flank towards the east would offer a good insurance against disaster. But this was far from being the only precaution taken by the enemy. Vast reinforcements were accumulated in the area liable to attack. A great number of guns were placed at commanding points. The ground naturally offers advantages to the defence, as Sir Douglas Haig discovered when he attacked there in September, 1914. The fifteen miles which formed the British front then were included in the area over which the French struck on Monday, and the first day's advance gave the Allies possession of the first German defensive system, with guns and 10,000 prisoners. When the battle front was extended on Tuesday, 12½ miles to the St. Hilaire-St. Souplet road, the number of prisoners rose by 3,500, and on Wednesday the

total was 17,000. In the last ten days, then, the Allies have taken 31,000 prisoners on the Western Front, and if averages mean anything, this means that at least 160,000 Germans have been placed *hors de combat*. But we shall be making a great error if we imagine that that figure represents the whole casualty list of the enemy during the last ten days. In the Battle of Vimy Ridge the bombardment, directed with the utmost skill, must have inflicted terrible casualties before the assault was launched, and the counter-attacks have been met with a storm of shell. But this battle is made to seem almost small by the terrific struggle which rages between Soissons and Auberive. The French battle has not secured such spectacular gains as the British, but it is fulfilling the main purpose of war in placing the enemy out of action.

It seems certain that this vast battle will be to some extent decisive. It is deliberately sought by ourselves and our Allies, and as deliberately accepted by the enemy. Generally speaking, in such circumstances, we should be justified in examining the terrain with the utmost care. The ground upon which gigantic armies come to grips can hardly fail to be of interest, and in former wars it would have had a more or less essential bearing upon the issue of the battle. At present the aspect of the conflict may be summed up sufficiently in the reflection that if the enemy stands, he comes under a superior concentration of guns over at least a third of the battle-front, and if he retires, he must fall back under the most prejudicial conditions. The Allies seek to enforce a retirement, and have laid their plans accordingly. As long as this remains true, the advantage is ours, however difficult the actual foreground of the advance may be. Under the masterly correlation of the different arms which now obtains, attack may even be made less costly than defence. The struggle is not at an obvious disadvantage for the Allies, as it would have been earlier in the war, and from it the war must emerge differently. We knew that Hindenburg had a considerable reserve, and while this was uninvolved we were ignorant as to what might be the future development of our plans. Conceivably, we might have had to send troops to some other front. The inconvenience of such a change has moved the Western Allies to make the fullest use of strategic initiative, and though at present we cannot wholly dismiss the possibility of an offensive on another front, its prevention is one of the objectives of the struggle that is now being waged.

It will probably be prolonged. In its prolongation is our chief hope, for it will mean that the enemy will be forced to throw in his strategic reserve, and with it all the jet and tinsel of his plans. We have determined to impose our will upon the enemy. We have conquered the initial difficulties of warfare in France, and it is easier to continue here than to go elsewhere. It is possible that the enemy was meditating another great offensive from the Trentino. He is even credited with the intention to attack at Riga. One thing is certain. Upon the battle which is now raging in France will depend whether the Germans can maintain a full and effective defensive on other fronts. The greatest issues are at stake, and for the moment no clear or final solution is to be expected. But the first blows have gone home. There has been evidence of weakening German *moral*. The fighting material of the Allies we believe to be superior to that of the enemy, and in the end it is this that will tell.

#### AMERICA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORLD'S SALVATION.

It may be doubted whether any statesman or monarch throughout the course of history has held a place of such determinant importance at so critical a conjuncture of

human affairs as that held to-day by the grandson of the Irish emigrant who occupies the White House at Washington. Coming into this world conflict, when every European nation is more than half-way down the road to ruin, America, with her great unimpaired manhood and her almost unlimited material resources, not only ensures the ultimate success of the alliance with which she casts her lot, but will be in a position to exercise a moderating and controlling power in the work of peace and reconstruction. For it is not only, or chiefly, the size of her contribution to the fighting strength of the Alliance that counts. If, as we hope and believe, the conflict is brought to an end before the lofty ideals and aspirations which breathe through the declarations of the President are tarnished by the prolonged passions of war or perverted by its terrific expediences, the principles of liberty and equality will have the greatest opportunity in history of moulding the future destiny, not of this nation or of that, but of the great human society of which nations are the individual members. No one can doubt that it has been the magnitude of this great opportunity and obligation that has underlain the masterly patience of Mr. Wilson during these years of trial. And there can be as little doubt that the reward of this patience is that he has now with him and at his disposal all that is best, noblest, and most self-sacrificing in the spirit of his people. Speaking through the two memorable addresses he has uttered, the formal declaration of the breach with Germany and the not less impressive appeal to the practical necessities of the new situation, is the veritable voice of American democracy. Mr. Wilson knows that underneath the dollar-worship, the power of trusts, and the corruption of machine politics, which have been the time-honored reproach against democracy in the United States, there glows a genuine feeling that America stands, under providence, for a great experiment in the art of human government, and that, in return for the long period of secure and fruitful isolation which she has enjoyed, she owes some such great constructive service to mankind as is indicated in the pronouncements of her President.

They misread America who pay too close regard to the occasion of her coming in. Some plain item of self-interest or personal defence always determines the occasion, though it seldom, if ever, furnishes the fund of motives which we call the cause. Nor need we suppose that the large vision of Mr. Wilson occupies as clearly the eyes of all his people. The fact is that the call to duty and the pride of human service, in extending the range of liberty and in helping to restore order to a broken world, touches everywhere and stirs to vigorous life the latent religious sentiment of Americans of every place and class and race. Americans kindle more easily to elevated language than do Britons. Some of this kindling may be sentimentality, but much is genuine sentiment—the vital response of human feeling to a vigorous call. We may be sure that, as the weeks and months flow on, this concrete direction given to American idealism will form the basis of a new political education, which will transform the thinking of the ordinary citizen and enlist his feelings ever more powerfully in the manifestness of the new destiny which lies before him. The ferment of thought and feeling is far more rapid and energetic in America than in our more class-bound and segregated communities.

Those in Europe—and they have been many—who have been somewhat scornful critics of American democracy may be invited to reconsider their judgment. One of the staples of this criticism has ever been that democracies must have a natural predilection for mediocre leaders. But is it a mere chance that, when the times call urgently for a great man, an Abraham Lincoln or a Woodrow Wilson comes forward, chosen by the people out of their many millions? Either democracy must be unusually prolific of great personality, or its method of selecting chiefs must be instinct with a higher wisdom than that with which its critics credit it. Both may be true. Anyhow, we claim that the presence of such a man as Mr. Wilson in such a place at such a moment is no mean vindication

of democratic institutions. Not less significant is the note of confidence and reliance in his addresses to his people. In Europe neither people nor Parliament were consulted or called into co-operation, until the die was cast by their secretive rulers, and then these rulers proceeded, still in secret, to bend and coerce all the resources of the peoples into the ways of war, pre-determined or improvised, to meet their privately conceived notions of expediency.

Take our own case. When did our rulers make to our people so informing and inspiring a practical appeal as that issued a few days ago to the people of the great Republic? A purely business document, but how admirably considered and worded, full of tactical wisdom, directed to correct the outworn notion of war as an affair in which fighting men and their arms were of supreme significance and to drive home the just economy of national life in war-time! How much greater would have been the efficiency of our national arrangements, how much greater the liberty that would have survived, had our governors formed their designs with so much discretion, and taken into their confidence the people, who would have to pay and die!

We agree that it is yet too early to pronounce on the success with which free democratic institutions may be directed to what is after all the unnatural work of waging war. At present America is still in the stage of words and preparations. But her conduct in this initial stage is at least valid testimony to the effective energies which will mature later on. No doubt she has learnt much from our mistakes. This is evident from the zealous endeavors to realize a just co-ordination between the fighting forces and the various vital industries, in field, factory, mine, railroad, whose due development are necessary to maintain a nation at war and to enable her to render the maximum assistance to her Allies. The stress laid by Mr. Wilson upon the obligation to find food, materials, and finance for the European Allies was dictated, of course, not merely by a sense of generosity but by a business-like realization of the needs of the situation. Had we been equally discreet and fore-sighted in our calculations, we should not have gone on cheerfully enlisting soldiers from Woolwich Arsenal, or have plundered our mines and farms of their skilled labor to fill our fighting ranks, when the needs of our Allies and the pressing emergency of the food situation were staring us in the face.

It will be a great achievement if America can effect the adjustment of her human and material resources to the work of war by the people's intelligent co-operation with the public purpose, keeping alive during war time the soul of liberty. The difficulties of the task should not be underrated. They cannot be light, either in the sphere of politics or industry. Much, if not everything, must depend upon preserving the finer ideals and purposes which at the outset are predominant. America can do much for us. By fulfilling her perilous and costly purpose of building a continuous bridge of moving boats across the broad Atlantic, bearing goods and materials, she may literally save this country. Can we not do something on our side to make her political task easier, and to sustain the higher ideals of the meaning of the war, which Mr. Wilson has set forth in such moving language? Our treatment of Ireland stands, as it has always stood, the great barrier against American belief in the justice or the generosity of British public conduct. If there were no other urgent reason for abating the animosity of Irishmen, even if we cannot conciliate their affection, the fact that almost all the Irish in America are the avowed enemies of co-operation with the Allies should, at such a moment in our fortunes, when our existence may turn upon the harmony and efficiency of America's policy, at least be taken into serious account. Nor should we, in concert with our Western Allies, fail to recognize that, as now with Russia, so with America, the formal renunciation of territorial acquisitions and infringements of economic liberties, is a prime necessity for the conservation of the new political and spiritual forces that have been inevitably attracted to the Alliance, and for the promise of a stabler civilization, erected on the ruins of dynastic ambition and class privilege.

## THE CHOICE IN EDUCATION.

A CHOICE as momentous as any that a nation can make lies before us at this moment. Are we or are we not going to release this life and the prospects of our society from the worst legacy of the industrial revolution? That is the question to which we shall give our answer when we decide what our education policy is to be.

The most sinister of the traditions of the industrial revolution is the tradition that treats the working-class child as the property of the employer. The generation that witnessed the stupendous changes which created the modern form of industry, regarded men, women, and children as servants of their new god—economic power. In this reasoning the workman's child was born into a serf class. The sooner he could be brought to the mill to mind bobbins the better for industry, and the better, therefore, for the nation. That was his only purpose in life, and to train his mind or body beyond the point at which it was obvious to everybody that education made him immediately a most efficient instrument, was simply to waste valuable time and energy. In nothing was the division of the nation into two nations more ruthlessly emphasized than in this general assumption that, whereas the children of the comfortable classes were to be educated because they had human faculties, the children of the working classes were merely to be considered in relation to the needs and uses of industry.

This tradition, which treats the working-class child primarily as a wage-earner, has clung to our minds with a fatal persistence. Take the document that has just been published by Mr. Herbert Lewis's Committee. Here is a publication breathing in several passages a spirit of courage and idealism rarely found in White Papers or Blue Books, and this very truth that "if the juvenile problem is to be solved, it must be by treating it primarily as a moral and not an economic issue" is stated with force and conviction. Yet when the public-spirited men who composed this Committee address themselves to a positive policy, they slip back into this bad and false atmosphere. Thus, whereas on one page they ask, "Is the civilization for which Englishmen have fought to be made a civilization worth fighting for?" on another they seek to disarm the possible hostility of parents by reminding them that "the reduction by eight hours a week of a working week of anything from forty-eight to ninety hours could only mean a reduction of wages by anything from a sixth to an eleventh." Is it really held that a civilization worth fighting for is compatible with a working week of ninety hours for the children of the poorer classes? Again, we are told on one page that employers have lately developed sound ideas about working-class education, and on another that if a local authority was allowed to raise its school-leaving age to fifteen, the mere existence of this power would disturb the employer's peace of mind, and turn him against reform altogether. Thus this document, with all its strain of enthusiasm and hope, cannot escape from the evil spell of this industrial spirit, and, as a consequence, we find men who are primarily interested in education trying to appease employers and workmen by explaining that they are only going to ask for eight hours a week. When we look into the suggested syllabuses, we find that in some cases six hours are to be assigned to technical classes, and that a boy of sixteen is to have just two hours a week for physical training, games, and general education. We have become so accustomed to hearing education defended on the ground that the nation wants clerks more like the German clerks, that it is no surprise to find education itself put into a subordinate place in any official publication. But it is a shock in the year of the Russian Revolution, after all the sacrifices that we have made for human ideals, to find men of public spirit and imagination still discussing this question as if industry has a natural right to prescribe the conditions of the good life for the great mass of the nation, and as if the inhuman state of things represented in the hours of van boys are destined to continue for all time.

Is it not time to begin at the other end, to argue that the children of the working classes have precisely the same right to education as the children of other

classes, the right, that is, which comes from their possession of human faculties? It is the business of industry to adapt itself to the conditions necessary for the development of freedom and character, not to draw boundaries within which these opportunities are to be forbidden. Some will say that this is an heroic policy, but the war has taught us that if a people is thrown on its resources, heroic policies are infinitely simpler than they seem. And if there are many who think that the emergencies which have called forth the energy of the nation on so stupendous a scale will end with peace, they are assuming that the nation will be less in earnest about its future than it has been about its effort in the war. We doubt whether this will be the view of the soldiers on their return. They will think this peace brings just as direct a summons to initiative and courage as the war itself. Above all, it must be remembered, their experience has made them impatient of the habit of looking on certain classes in the State as the instruments of wealth or power in the hands of others. To the outside world a soldier may seem to be mere cannon fodder, disposed by all he has suffered to take a subordinate and dependent place in life after the war. But for most of the men who went from the mill or the farm or the counter or the workshop to the trenches and the swamps, war has had just the opposite effect. It has made them more conscious of their dignity as men, more critical of the spirit of industrial discipline which does violence to that dignity, and treats them primarily as wage-earners rather than as citizens.

Let the State then lay down the conditions necessary for the proper development of the mind and body of its citizens. Can those conditions be put at less than half-time up to eighteen? We think not. Industry will then adapt itself to this change as it has adapted itself to Factory Acts in the past. In any case, some adaptation is necessary at a time when industry is passing through a kind of revolution, when, too, the question of the re-employment of wounded men is upon us. If all that is wanted is a new faith in the spirit of democracy, the rejection of the servile traditions of our industrial "rich," and if we have not enough courage or imagination to emancipate ourselves from this evil legacy, we may say good-bye to all our dreams of reconstruction. Do not let it be said of us that the solemn lessons of the war made so light an impression on our mind and conscience that instead of seizing the opportunity to make some atonement for our neglect of the youth of yesterday, we chose deliberately to betray the youth of to-morrow.

## A London Diary.

LONDON, FRIDAY.

OF late years I have been little in the House of Commons, but, judging by the debate on the interdict on *THE NATION*, the old Parliamentary spirit has not gone out of it. Its air was lively and agitated, as is its wont when a change of political weather is imminent. The Ministerial Whips circulated freely, button-holing and pleading. The dead dinner-hour was practically abolished. The House filled up rapidly, and though the Liberal organization was not called on, the Liberal feeling was active, and in time completely dominated the House. Where was the other side? I could not see one Conservative to three Liberals. Not one private member of the Unionist Party rose to say a word in the Prime Minister's support; barely half-a-dozen voices, I should say, greeted him with the thin ghost of a cheer. I am told that their voting strength was in reserve, and that it would have saved the division. No one could say. The Liberal Party was not in a state of freedom. If it had been and the vote had been taken on the merits of the

question, the Government could not have survived. For this reason, and this alone, the verdict of the division was avoided. But the verdict of the debate was an overwhelming "Aye" to Mr. Pringle's motion.

THE true novelty of my impression was the part which the Prime Minister filled in it. I have seen seven Prime Ministers in Parliament. Two of them—Lord Rosebery and Lord Salisbury—lived in a certain detachment from its life, the one from want of experience, the other from a certain loneliness of mind. But none of them presented so remote and unfriended a figure as Mr. George. He entered the House as a stranger, and left it a stranger. It heard his speech with barely a token of regard, and seemed to forget him five minutes after he had left it to resume his butterfly's dance over the war. I suppose this indifference was due partly to the tenuity of the speech, its fabric of slight but not good-natured rhetoric. But it was much more Parliament's return for his own studied neglect of it. The Prime Minister has no Parliamentary Party; only a patrol of gossips and gobemouaches, while he abandons without a shot fired the great intellectual and spiritual conquests of his predecessors. Where, then, is his hold? Even his Press is divided. One organ, the "Express," for example, attacks the scheme of Liquor Purchase, and backs Mr. Bonar Law. Another, the "Chronicle," supports Liquor Purchase and attacks Sir Edward Carson. How long can these disharmonies persist?

IT is this feeling of insecurity which makes some men nervous at the prospect of a Dissolution, and others feel that this light adventure of Mr. George's Premiership, with its dangerous background of secret bureaucracy, must somehow be brought to an end, and that an election would be one way of ending it. An election would be a farce and a scandal, for there is no true constituency to appeal to. But it might be the beginning of an effort to secure the real stability which the Government lacks. Take the case of Sir George McCrae. The Prime Minister's visit to Scotland was not, I am told, unconnected with it. If it was, it was a failure. Sir George is a popular person; but Liberal Scotland would not have him, and the Aberdeen rebuff has been followed by the fiasco of South Edinburgh. Too many such failures there cannot be; the Prime Minister cannot afford to retreat too far into the recesses of Tory partisanship.

THEN there is Ireland. I have many reports of her attitude of expectation. All parties are waiting for the Government, with a kind of sombre intensity of which that light-minded company seem hardly aware. It is still coquetting with Ulster, and being answered by her with a curt reference to Mr. George's apology for partitionist Unionism. But partition is dead. Southern Unionism is turning hotly from it, and, with a less keen or visible movement, towards the policy of a Dominion settlement, on which Sinn Féin is almost united, and towards which moderate Nationalism tends. The policy of Home Rule is again debated in detail, and with the impassioned concentration which Ireland devotes to each phase of her always developing problem. And the Government has nothing to offer her, and nothing to say that she will regard as relevant or helpful.

Two speeches in *THE NATION* debate specially interested me, Mr. Pringle's and Mr. Churchill's.

Mr. Pringle's Parliamentary future is made; he and his companion, Mr. Hogge, are the guerilla chiefs of Liberalism; he has style, personality, wit—above all, the power of attack and sharp, suggestive criticism. Mr. Churchill I had not heard since he came into his strength as a debater. His earlier speeches were remarkable enough for their form and intellectual force, but they lacked the great Parliamentary qualities of ease and flow, which carry on an argument, and therefore delight the listener, as well as instructing or "intriguing" him. Now that this gift also has been acquired, Mr. Churchill seems to me to have finished his apprenticeship and entered the business of mastery.

How does the German press propaganda—this "use" of British newspaper opinion for which our Censorship penalizes *THE NATION*—really work? I came across a typical instance, which is applied to the "Daily News" by much the same controversial method as Mr. George used against *THE NATION*. It came from the debate on reprisals. The Germans had taken some disciplinary measures against a number of officer prisoners, and the question arose as to reprisals. The "Daily News" very properly remarked that "we have our own way of dealing with prisoners, and we prefer to keep to it." This was promptly seized upon by the Germans and circulated to prove the horrible secret tortures to which their prisoners were subjected. Yet the obvious meaning was that we should not make any difference in our treatment of them. Could there be a better example of the folly of making German action or opinion the measure of our own view of the character of our Press?

THE following reaches me in a letter from a well-informed Englishman in Petrograd:—

"Your message, Mr. Gardiner's, Mr. Snowden's, and Mr. Dillon's . . . struck the right note, which up to that time had very much not been struck by the messages, newspaper articles, and speeches coming from London, and grave harm to the relations between the two great peoples was being caused thereby. The absurd folly of the 'Times,' with the inclusion of Stephen Graham's apology for the Romanoffs, the fatuous remark of Bonar Law about being sorry for the Emperor, who has been for two and a-half years a faithful ally (one of the chief reasons why he disappeared so quickly is that the Russians, awoke to the fact that he and the people round him were deliberately hindering the prosecution of the war), the still more stupid inclusion in Lloyd George's speech of a reference to the services rendered to the Allies by the Emperor, had caused anger amongst a section of the thinking, intelligent, responsible Russians, and comments on the selfishness of England. . . . You have rendered our country and Russia a great service. To-day I just received *THE NATION* of the 10th of February. With the knowledge and information then at your command, you have given a very accurate representation of the main features. . . . I am still of opinion that all will go well."

It is shocking to hear of Mr. W. F. Bailey's death, the fruit of an accident at a shooting party. Mr. Bailey was a large part of Dublin and of London also, for he was a great carrier of the light luggage of politics and art, and of many of their weightier matters also. He was an admirable official, who did much for the "re-striping" of Irish land. But his service lay also in the link he kept up between Nationalism and Liberalism. A gossip, I suppose, he would be called; but it was the gossip of ideas and policies rather than of tittle-tattle. Many will miss this kind, competent, and bustling figure.

A WAYFARER.

## Life and Letters.

### "INSTANS TYRANNUS."

A WEEK or two ago, a queer little fellow was seated upon the hearth of a famous house in a great city. He was the Lar of the house, and had sat there for many years while generation after generation of powerful rulers had occupied it. In the course of those years, without growing any older, he had imbibed a considerable amount of the current wisdom as it passed, and at the moment he was softly singing to himself the first verse of a poem which he read from a new little book. It ran:—

#### FIRST SOUL.

"I was a demagogue; but why relate  
What I was once, who, at the instant call  
Of Fate—and Harmsworth—am the Lord of all,  
Master of war, and savior of the State?  
I'm out to fight for freedom—this you know,  
For I myself have often told you so."

The Lar had little difficulty in identifying this champion of freedom with the great Chief at present occupying the house, from which, with the aid of certain scribes, he had driven his predecessor. Sprung from respectable origin, that Great Chief had manfully overcome the obstacles of his birth, his education, and a form of religion regarded as inappropriate to the best society. Inspired by fine, if fleeting, enthusiasms, he had displayed such courage in the defence of noble opinions that he was hounded from public meetings, buffeted by mobs, derided by the hirelings of wealthy interests, and denounced as a social plague by the classes which claimed that country's Government as their natural inheritance. Society shivered at his name, and the Public Hall which had echoed his invectives against aristocratic predominance was held to typify revolutionary turmoil. All the more for these reasons, the few who stood for the ideals of peace and equality honored him as a protagonist, and many of the common people heard him gladly.

In spite of such impediments, he had at last risen to a height, not merely of ambition (such a mind could be assumed free from that last infirmity!), but of opportunity to realize the liberating purposes which he had always set before him. In his new position, however, new influences began to work upon his nature. Friends of a social standing to which he was unaccustomed were now naturally attracted. Wealth, with comfortable relief, discovered he was not so indifferent to wealth as had been supposed. Aristocracy decided there was something to be said for the fellow after all. So encouraged, he sought to transform power into omnipotence, and to attain the magnificence of the unknown by withdrawing from the public gaze (especially from an Assembly which his new friends called the Pow-wow), the while he kept in touch with public opinion through submissive scribes. Three of his former enemies—men of high distinction, upon whom he had once lavished his gifts of eloquent vituperation—were now content to serve as his subordinate colleagues in Government. Eminent statesmen waited for audience without repining, just as princely petitioners used to wait in the ante-chamber of Yildiz Kiosk: and, like the Grand Turk, he maintained a bodyguard of youthful attendants embowered in his garden court.

So it happened that one morning, while the Lar was murmuring the verse of that new poem, and meditating upon the mutability of human affairs, three of those garden denizens entered the room, and stood about rather impatiently, for they were awaiting breakfast. One of them was called Narcissus, because, conscious of his own perfection, he remained indifferent to other forms of beauty. Another was called Heliotrope, from his instinctive dexterity in facing the rising sun. And the third was Geranium, who always blushed when he blundered, and he blundered often.

"Are we kept waiting for an editor who wants priming, or for another member of the Pow-wow who wants a job?" asked Geranium at last.

"Learn to restrain your innuendos," Narcissus answered, preserving an unruffled calm in the face of hunger. "Late last night, the Chief asked me for a virile war-book, with a view to his next peroration, and native eloquence is exacting, as I have always found myself. What is worse, I noticed he was opening the new issue of a weekly paper which one hesitates even to name. It always acts upon him as an irritant, and I fear he has passed an uneasy night."

If they had listened, they might have heard the Lar upon the hearthstone murmuring to himself: "Once upon a time, there was a Prince who could marry no one but a real Princess. So when a girl came to the door and said she was a real Princess, his mother tested her claim by putting a pea upon her bedstead and covering it over with twenty mattresses and twenty feather-beds. But the girl could not sleep all night for the torment of feeling something hard under her, and she got up all black and blue with bruises. Then everyone recognized that she was a real Princess, judging by this evidence of unusual delicacy. I wonder if a similar test reveals the real Statesman."

Before the Lar could solve this question, the door opened, and the Great Chief hurriedly entered. He was a distinguished-looking man, handsomely attractive; but every now and then a suspicious expression came into his eyes, which looked shiftily this way and that, as though on the defensive.

That morning his face was haggard, and his manner slightly irritable.

"We were just admiring your recent messages to the Eastern and Western Allies, sir," said Heliotrope, with soothing tact, as they sat down to table. "Those were great sentences about the Eastern Revolution: 'It reveals the fundamental truth that this war is at bottom a struggle for popular government as well as for liberty.' And again, 'Freedom is the condition of peace.' Yet, on the whole, I admire even more your message to the Western nation, describing how they held back until they were fully convinced the fight was not a sordid struggle for power and possessions but an unselfish struggle to overthrow a sinister conspiracy against human liberty and human right."

"I'm glad you like them," replied the Chief; "but there is no difficulty in saying things well so long as one is entirely sincere."

"If I may say so," said Geranium, "I like the style of these pronouncements better even than your knock-out interview, sincere and racy though that was."

The Chief cast a quick look at Geranium, who blushed, fearing that he might have blundered. The Chief continued: "Talking of the knock-out blow, here's that weekly paper at me again. It says it is disgusted at the Knock-out poster in the streets, but supposes it is useless to remonstrate, since the Great Chief set the example; it says that the real danger to the country lies in the want of seriousness in our rulers. Now, which of my colleagues is it aiming at? No one on earth ever thought of me and want of seriousness together."

"Shameful!" cried the three in unison.

"Almost as bad as what the decent papers said about the Old Gang!" added Geranium.

The Chief again glanced at him, and the poor fellow knew he had blundered.

"Your remark," observed Narcissus, contemplating the blushing face from an icy vantage-ground; "your remark, Geranium, is not only true, but inadequate."

"I bear the editor no ill-will," the Chief expostulated: "all the more so because he does me an injustice."

If they had listened, they might have heard the Lar murmuring, "Charity, my dear, when I take my chamber-candlestick to-night, remind me to be more than usually particular in praying for Mr. Anthony Chuzzlewit, who has done me an injustice."

But they did not hear, and the Chief continued: "Yet something, certainly, should be done. I'm thinking not of myself, but of the country. Attacks upon the directing powers in a State undermine the national confidence."

"Couldn't you ask him to breakfast?" Heliotrope

suggested. "We all know editors who have yielded to that distinction, and grown tame under your magnetic eye."

"Too good for the fellow!" said Narcissus. "In Germany they'd try him for *lèse-majesté*. We're fighting Militarism, and must use the weapons of Militarismus. We must take lessons from the enemy."

"Yes, something will have to be done," said the Chief.

And the Lar murmured the lines from "Instans Tyrannus":—

"So, I soberly laid my last plan  
To extinguish the man.  
Round his creep-hole, with never a break,  
Ran my fires for his sake;  
Overhead, did my thunder combine  
With my underground mine;  
Till I looked from my labor content  
To enjoy the event."

"Hullo!" cried the Chief, suddenly, as he flung the "Times" wide open, "listen to this! Here he's writing to say that the Government has stopped his paper from going abroad!"

"As the Editor of the 'Chameleon' observes about everything every evening," said Heliotrope, "that is quite as it should be."

"Oh, suppress it altogether!" cried Narcissus.

"But who can have done this?" continued the Chief, looking up at the ceiling in thoughtful bewilderment; "I assure you I know nothing about it. I never heard of such a proposal till this minute."

If they had listened, they might have heard the Lar murmuring: "The King who said, 'Who will rid me of this pestilent priest?' did not commit the murder, but in the end was flogged at the tomb."

"Probably it was the Cherub who sits up aloft at the Office of War," said Narcissus.

"Three cheers for the chubby Cherub!" cried Heliotrope.

"He might have asked your orders first," Geranium blurted out.

"My dear young friend," replied the Chief, solemnly, "if ever you should reach a position in the least approaching mine, and something unpleasant or unpopular has to be done, you will pour blessings on the man who does it, and says nothing till all is over but the howling. There you stand in the midst, blameless and free, wearing the white flower of a moral and political *alibi*; while you reap the advantage without fear and without reproach."

The speaker's expression was transfigured. All trace of care and anxiety had vanished. He realized with thankfulness that Providence unsolicited had opened before him a path to national service combined with personal retaliation. It was many years since he had so keenly realized that, as the child of destiny, he was following the gleam.

But if they had listened, they would have heard the Lar murmuring the ancient curse upon tyrants: "Virtutem videant:—Let them behold virtue from afar, and wither at her loss."

#### JOURNEYS END.

In August the strip of garden behind the little house was filled to its fences, overwhelmed with poppies. The frail, wrinkled cups were of every color, pale-yellow and dark-yellow, flame-colored, puce, vermillion, greenish-white. There were giants hairy as cactuses, Shirleys tremulous as poised butterflies, and though in passing through them along the narrow path, she held her skirt tightly about her, so close was the press that at the end of her march out and in of inspection (there was no tour about it since the path was merely a dark line dividing the massed regiments of the flowers) the hem of her black gown would be streaked and powdered with the purple-brown of the pollen.

At the end of the garden, shouldered on all sides

by the flowers, was a broken greenhouse, of which every pane was now but a jagged ruin. She used to stand for ten minutes at a time contemplating the ruin.

"I can't bear the sight of that thing," she would say, "it bothers me."

She did not entirely love the poppies even. They were but a second-best. She knew that a garden should have grass plots distinct from its flower beds, and that geraniums and begonias, roses, carnations, and cherry pie were the proper flowers to grow in it. Her small front garden with its one round bed had a good supply of Marguerite daisies, and the grass was kept trimmed when, by means of tapping on the window and beckoning with a majestic forefinger, she succeeded in drawing in through her gate one of the half-tramp, half-jobbing-gardener fellows who, with bowler hats and probably stolen tools, kept the noiseless suburb with its veronica hedges and laurel trees in order. But the back garden was more than an eighteenpenny job, and altogether too much for her. Once indeed she had brought one of these stray men through her hall and kitchen to consult with him about possible changes, and when he had gone he had taken with him from the kitchen table a spoon, one of her old thin silver spoons from which all glory was departed save the faintly traced knot of initials on the handle. So the poppies had the back garden to themselves. They were transparent and glowing when the light came yellow and level across the low fences in the evenings; in the mornings the glass splinters in the old greenhouse sparkled in the sun, and she would come out in her dressing gown before she had made her tea for breakfast, and stand looking about her.

"Are you fond of flowers?" was a question she had asked people all her life.

She was a tall, remarkably upright old lady, very deaf. The soundless sea had begun to rise about her years ago, and now she no longer tried to combat it. Her ear-trumpet, the black swan, was at the back of her wardrobe. She got it out sometimes to help her to listen; it is doubtful if it helped her to hear. Her hair was iron-grey and thin. It was parted in the middle, and drawn to a tiny cluster of curls at the back of her head, where a comb supported it. She had worn it so ever since her black and shining bunches of side curls had gone out of fashion. Her eyes were green, and in daylight she could read without spectacles. Her nose was thin, and the tip cold when one kissed her. The fitted bodice of her gown fastened with a row of little buttons. At the back her skirts touched upon the ground, but in front they were lifted several inches above it, for she had borne many children. She had long, fine, almond-nailed hands, of which she was very proud.

"Feel that!" she would say, "isn't that a soft hand? Can you feel any bones in it? Now let me feel yours."

The comparison was certain to be in her favor. Beside her wedding ring she wore another, of which the delightful little gold curves, curves like the top of a minute Doric column, held six stones: a ruby, an emerald, a garnet, an amethyst, a second ruby, and a diamond.

"What does that spell?" she would ask. It was her engagement ring.

She read her Bible every night and on Sunday mornings, but she never talked of religion. She preferred to read or comment on what was in an illustrated paper, or in any paper, novels of adventure, stories of travel, reminiscences. Every night she had a "great hunt" for her spectacles, finding them at length in the pocket of her petticoat or between the very pages of the book she was preparing to read. Then she exclaimed in her angular, pleasant old voice that the fairies had taken a loan of them. The sentimental, the improving, the beauteous she abhorred. She liked to find "comical" anecdotes about an uncle of hers in Jonah Barrington, or when politics were in question, to get down Maxwell's History of the Rebellion with its Cruikshank illustrations, and holding it with its green cover outwards, to ask gleefully:

"Would you like to see a portrait of your friends?" Then she would turn it round.

"A pack of asses," was her comment with much enjoyment and her Dublin accent.

She disapproved with almost equal force of Catholics and Orangemen.

"Of course, I believe that everyone should be free to practise their own religion," she said; but nuns were known to kidnap children, orange and blue were good colors, and no one could deny the shooting of the Reverend Mr. Soper on his way to evensong sometime in the 'seventies. "A most harmless, honest, good man." Mr. Soper was the end of many arguments.

Earlier memories came to her in abundance as she sat at the round table when the lamp was lighted, memories of the famine, when the wailing from the village used to come up to them in the big house till they themselves could not eat, but must rise and take their dinners down to the famished people. Of the fever, and her own fainting fit when she had read the letter that had been tucked into the bosom of "poor Annie" who died of typhus. She had read all the letters for the village in those days, and only that one time had her courage failed her. Moving and tragic tales, merry ones too of the Relief Works Major, of the lady who was sent to church in the home-made crinoline—"and when she sat down it went up in front, and when she knelt down it went up at the back"—and of the drunken cook who had been to the wake of "the beautifullest black man that ever you did see."

She herself never went to church in these days. Nominally because she was too deaf to hear the service, really because she considered her bonnet too shabby. She had two bonnets, one of which had been her best, and she would take them from the round yellow tin box in which they were housed and look at them, one on either hand.

"I want a new bonnet," she would say, not complaining. She never complained, or spoke regrets, nor was she ever seen to shed tears except when her last tenant bolted without paying his rent. She shook her head at the bonnets half-humorously. "Well, well."

She had, however, innumerable pairs of black kid gloves, birthday and Christmas presents for countless anniversaries, put away carefully in their original tissue paper, each pair identified in her memory with its sender. She disliked the trouble of forcing the new kid on to her soft old hands, and preferred to wear a pair until the right palm went into a hole from the friction of her umbrella handle to being bothered with new ones. She always took her umbrella with her when she went out, or a sunshade with a long carved handle, using it as a walking stick, and, owing to her deafness, striking it with tremendous emphasis upon the pavement.

With poverty she had adopted some of the habits of the poor. She did not make a complete toilet till she had breakfasted and swept her rooms and set her fire and made her bed. Then she would unlock a cupboard, and drink some whisky and eat a biscuit—"Do you know who gave me that biscuit box?"—and after that turn herself from a tall strange figure in a blue dressing gown to a tall old lady in black satin.

After this, she would sit at her window behind the lace curtains and the Killarney fern that had for so very long been cherished under its glass bell—since the days of the real greenhouse indeed, which she had tended like a baby, rising in the small hours to keep its charcoal stove burning—and watch for the tradesmen. Bread and milk, the laundry, must not be let slip by. She would be ready for them in the doorway with her purse in her hand. (Letters she could detect at other times by a leap of pictures or ornaments at the postman's knock.) Later she would sally out to make her other few purchases. She had always a moment of anxiety as the door shut behind her, lest she had forgotten her key, and another on returning, lest the lock should stick in an obstinate, perverse way it sometimes had, and keep her on the doorstep. She lived all alone in this her own house for want of a better tenant in the rooms beside the hall door with its enormous flight of steps, and the uncurtained upper windows seemed to watch her coming and going with a raw stare.

In the afternoons she dozed in her chair, her nose looking strangely sharp and her cheeks sunken, and would suddenly awake with: "Did I have a nap?" At other times she said: "I always get a nice dream, and I always sleep well in a storm."

Her chief anxieties beyond the fewness of her pence were her keys, and the boxes that they fitted. All her past life was in her boxes, all her treasures, her claims upon the world for ease and comfort, much of her tenderness. For many years as she had moved from lodging to cheaper lodging, from front rooms to back rooms, from two rooms to one, they had been fort and wardrobe to her. So here in her last stronghold they remained. She packed and repacked them, forgot what they contained, rummaged in discovery, enjoyed brief moments of renewed ownership. Lace, little jewels, inlaid boxes, her wedding shawl, scraps of silk, a grey cotton dress with white spots upon it, knives and spoons and forks that in her solitude she did not need, faded photographs, a penwiper blanket stitched in yellow—"Do you know who gave me that?" She was no longer able to do the elaborate white embroidery for sales of work that had formerly been her proud delight, for she could not now easily thread a needle. "Ah, botheration!" She would give it up with a laugh after half-a-dozen dabbings with the end of the thread. Her visitors yearly were fewer. Old Miss Haynes was dead. "Poor Miss Haynes, I miss her sadly." Mrs. Quail and Mrs. Barton could no longer drive out. Age was imprisoning them all. Sometimes a few middle-aged women came to see her, elderly spinsters whom she regarded as little girls. "Poor Cathy, she's a great guy. She's always making a show of herself"—and she might disconcertingly rap out at them, "What's that *gazebo* you have on your head? What in reason prevailed on you to choose that color?"

Still she was very glad to see them, to see her room peopled, to catch their remote shoutings, to clatter the teaspoons, to bring out the biscuit box. And when they were gone, she would stand at the window for a long while looking after them, until she saw the lamplighter going through the dusk upon his round. Then she would step back into her sitting-room, and begin to get things settled for the night. She would light her lamp and shut fast her window and pull down the blind, and stand still a moment again when that was done, looking at the lamplight on the walls, the points of brightness, the shadows with uncertain edges from the fire. Then she would go through the folding door into her bedroom, and close its window and pull down its blind, leaving the dividing doors a little open, and, last, she would make her way down the now dark flight of five steps to the kitchen. The window would glimmer at her, and she would put up her hand and feel that the latch was secure, and she would bolt the back door, shooting the bolts into their rings with a noise that could vibrate security even to her ears. From there to the front door with its bolts and chain. The light from the street-lamp came in a pale half-moon through the fanlight. Solitude and darkness.

Upright and intrepid, she turned now to her sitting room, and closed the door upon the echoing emptiness outside. For awhile she would read; but presently she would lay her spectacles in the centre of the book, and draw her chair up to the fire and sit there thinking, with her skirt turned back on to her knees.

What she thought of as she sat there is uncertain—whether of her past life, of her mother, of her girlhood in the West and her pretty pink cheeks and chin, of her stepbrothers and herself a child who lost her pantalettes in the mud, of the Lakes of Killarney, of the grandchild who began its "little song" and tucked down its head upon her arm to sleep, or of that endless sleep that must inevitably creep one day out of the future towards her. One thing is certain, that the spirit that had kept her dominant and upright through the full measure of prosperity and adversity, could never by mere strangeness, loneliness, or pain, by the fear of death any more than by the fear of living, be vanquished.

SYLVIA LYND.

#### MR. CHURCHILL ON THE INTERDICT.

[We give below a verbatim report of Mr. Churchill's brilliant speech on Mr. Pringle's motion for the adjournment of the House of Commons, calling attention to the suppression of the overseas circulation of THE NATION.]

MR. CHURCHILL: I thought I understood from my right hon. friend that he intended to remain, at any rate to listen to a single speech in reply to his. It occurred to me, and I think to most members in the House, during the course of the admirable speech of my hon. friend (Mr. Pringle), and still more during the impassioned oration to which we have just been privileged to listen, that we run a risk of making too much of this on both sides, and I am very sorry my right hon. friend has not remained in order that we might have procured his assent to certain propositions to which I think he would very readily have agreed, and which would, I think, have shown that the differences which exist on this matter in the House are not nearly so wide as have been represented by the two very excellent orations to which we have listened. I have read these articles in THE NATION. I read them since the matter was raised at Question Time, and I am bound to say, after all this thunder that has occurred, I cannot see what reasonable ground there is for taking exception to them. If I were to take up the time of the House in reading the whole article, it would not be necessary for anyone to say anything further on the subject. The article of March 3rd in relation to the whole position in which we stand is absolutely immaterial and innocent. I say that without any reference to the opinions contained in that article, or to expressions of agreement with them or disagreement from them. You must observe a sense of proportion in these things. We have as our first resolve to beat the enemy, but we also wish to preserve some decent and sensible principles of government in this country for our own use and enjoyment, not only now but in days to come.

This article of March 3rd consists of mere expressions of opinion on military matters couched in moderate language. There is no disclosure, such as has often occurred in many newspapers, of military or naval facts. There is no shrewdly informed speculation about plans and forthcoming operations. That is another great danger, because really instructed discussion about future operations may be of value to the enemy. There are no attacks of a personal character upon naval or military commanders in the field, such as might make bad feeling between them and the men who have to risk their lives on the faith of their judgment and authority. There is nothing in this article about submarines so alarmist as what was said by the First Lord of the Admiralty in the City. There is nothing so alarmist as was said by the hon. gentleman (Mr. Hayes Fisher) when he described our situation at a public meeting as being one of dire peril. There is nothing in this article half so alarming or so fruitful from the point of view of enemy propaganda as that. The Prime Minister, who left the House just now, made a speech—I well remember reading it last year—in which he said the British Government was always too late, and he dwelt on this with all the powerful oratory and iteration which is the aid of the oratory in which he excels, and he pressed this point, and if there was anything which could have encouraged the Germans it would have been this speech by so prominent a Minister. There is nothing in this article like that. We must look at facts. Rhetoric, prejudicial arguments, all these things have their place, but there must be cool and loyal study of facts in the House of Commons. Everything in this article makes mild reading compared with the Dardanelles Report from the point of view of public confidence. If the House will allow me to say so, I noticed several very objectionable passages about that Report—very objectionable. But we must not allow personal matters to come into these questions. Then there are in this article a series of, I must say, fairly obvious remarks about the German retreat in Champagne, which was being proclaimed as an

immense victory for our Armies and as a great disaster for the Germans. As a matter of fact, everyone now sees that the Germans were very well advised to make that retreat, and if they had been so foolish as to wait they would have suffered under the massed artillery of our Army the same kind of ill-usage as they have received in front of Arras. But that seems to be a very cogent and a very reasonable observation to have made at that time, and I cannot conceive what there is improper in it. Anyhow, it was an unauthoritative, unofficial expression of opinion, not accompanied by disclosure of information or forecasts of plans.

We have been told by my right hon. friend, who has just left us, that it discourages our troops. Has it discouraged our troops? Does he really think that our troops in the trenches, in close and continual contact with reality, knowing the whole of this as no other human beings can know it, are going to be discouraged by what they read the Editor of THE NATION has said about the character of the German retreat? What they are concerned about is the demeanor of the enemy on their front and the amount of artillery support they have from their rear. They are not in the least likely to be discouraged because they know Mr. Massingham has expressed an opinion that the Germans were well advised to accelerate their retreat. They have got a great deal more discouraging and difficult obstacles to get over than that. Then we are told that it will encourage the Germans. I never thought I should hear that argument from my right hon. friend the present Prime Minister. I remember the contempt, the robust and manly contempt, with which he used to treat that argument when it was used about encouraging the Boers. He knows perfectly well, and so do most members of this House who have been in it for the last fifteen or twenty years, that the military authorities always are inclined to resent any criticism of an unpalatable character, and to say that any criticism of that character has the effect of encouraging the enemy. It is the cheapest kind of argument, and, pushed to its logical extreme, it would lead to a universal harmonious chorus of adulation from morning to night about whatever was done until some frightful disaster took place.

Are we really to believe that the German General Staff are going to derive encouragement from Mr. Massingham's military opinions of the present operations on the Western Front? Conceive the position. Here are the great leaders of the German Army gathered together at their headquarters. They have to grapple with the most formidable problems that have ever confronted human beings. The capture of 10,000 prisoners, the forcing of great positions, the accumulation in their front of immense masses of material, 100,000,000 Americans declaring war against them, and that at this moment of deep depression there suddenly arrives THE NATION, which shows them for the first time their retreat in its true light. Then we are told, "Ah, it may not affect the Staff opinion, but what about the opinion of the German masses, the masses of the German people?" Their rations are reduced, but, never mind, they have Mr. Massingham's article to encourage them. The House knows perfectly well that all the newspapers of these belligerent countries have continually throughout the war clipped unfairly extracts apart from their context, and twisted them, and made whatever mutilations they thought convenient, from newspapers of the other belligerent countries. That has been the universal system.

Mr. DILLON: The "Times" does it every day.

Mr. CHURCHILL: I think that the German Press is extremely fertile. I do not know what the experience of other members may be, but my experience in reading the newspapers throughout this war has been that very much more frank and virile admissions are made by German newspapers than are made by our newspapers. That is not entirely due to the censorship. It is due to the fact that our newspapers very largely confine themselves to optimistic statements. There is hardly a day goes by but we see very damaging statements in the

German Press, if words can damage now. One of the most extraordinary facts of the situation is the lack of the power of words and of ideas. If words and quotations did play a real and vital part in this war, I see every day that German papers contain statements, indiscretions, criticisms, and admissions which would be of a damaging character. Does one really pretend that snippets from newspaper articles weigh for an instant or weigh for a pennyweight in forming the opinions of immense masses of millions of people, gripped by a great war and bowed under the cruellest afflictions that have ever racked the human race? Does anyone suggest that in this time of suffering and privation, universal over the nations of Christendom, that a few little snippets from newspapers, cut here and there from amongst other things, are going to influence nations, to influence their fighting value, and to make a difference in their capacity for continuing this war? It is absurd.

Then we are told that the Germans used these kind of articles as propaganda to mislead neutrals. I want to know what neutrals were misled by THE NATION's article. It certainly did not mislead the United States. If we are to attribute these tremendous evil influences to occasional articles in a weekly newspaper, that they may, as the Prime Minister has indicated, perhaps make the whole difference between our winning or losing the war, then it is only fair to attribute also the good things that happen. You may just as reasonably contend that it was these articles that brought the United States in. Is it not quite absurd to suggest that the people of the United States are not perfectly capable of forming their own opinions about the character of the submarine warfare or of the retreat on the Western front? Of course, they are. I have studied with some attention American publications during the war, and I have been struck by the very much greater degree of information and of impartial critical knowledge possessed by the people of the United States, as judged by their periodicals, than is possessed by the people of this country, judged by the publications we have here. Then we are told, "Anyhow, the Germans have used the article." That is the real argument which the Prime Minister used. If they think it does not help them, therefore it ought not to be allowed. Do not let us exaggerate the position. Let us look at the real and important point which is at stake. The fortune and the liberty of our Press ought not to be decided or ruled by what use the German newspaper agencies choose to make of it. It ought to be decided on its own merits in regard to definite facts. The administration of this country in regard to newspapers cannot be based upon the caprice of a Munchausen department which collects tit-bits for the German wireless telegraphy. Ever since the beginning of the war the Germans have been sending snippets from all papers, not only from THE NATION. I remember when I was at the Admiralty night after night there were quotations from the "Morning Post," quotations from the "Times," and quotations from the "Daily Mail," which were very disagreeable to the Admiralty. I remember seeing those. I do not recollect that any action of this kind was taken. If the Germans had not telegraphed this quotation from THE NATION they would have found something else just as good to serve their purpose. There is always something just as good in the vast newspapers of this country which can be cut out and used at the right moment to serve their purposes. I can see that the Government have got into a mess over this simply because, in the first place, their agents made a weighty matter unnecessarily of this small point, and because they, in what I think is an undue love of power and an undue love of the assertion of arbitrary power, will not speak a few kindly words to the House of Commons, and indicate that this sort of thing will not occur again. I think that, supposing an article in a newspaper like THE NATION—a newspaper that carries a great deal of the intellectual and moral thought of this country in association with it—became very freely quoted in the German wireless, it would be quite easy for the Censorship authorities at the War Office to send copies of the German wireless to the editor of THE

NATION, pointing out to the editor that "this is the sort of use that is being made of your criticism, and we think you ought to know it." And I have very little doubt, if this were put, especially in a matter of so little importance as this, a mere academic opinion on a technical matter by persons not versed in technical affairs, that the view and wishes of the Department would have been met in a friendly and civil manner. At any rate, that seems to me to be the reasonable thing to do.

There must be clear rules and definite principles upon which the censorship is administered. Papers have been prohibited because of sedition. There is a law on that. There are definite canons to which papers must conform or not conform. It is not a mere matter of taste of the tact of some perhaps very unqualified though very worthy person sitting in a small room at the War Office. It is impossible to make the status and position of the English Press, and the regulations applying to them, dependent upon the quotability or non-quotability of that Press by the German wireless agents. That is altogether an illegitimate foundation on which to act in regard to what is fair and right in this country. I have read these articles most attentively, and I say without any hesitation that if these articles are to be penalized, there is no criticism, however moderate, of military operations which may be printed by any paper in this country which could not be equally penalized, and if this paper is penalized there is no paper which has criticized the Government which could not equally be made the subject of these restrictions. And I hope that my right hon. friend (Mr. Bonar Law), who is going to represent the Prime Minister in the later phases of this debate, will establish a little closer contact between the opinion of the Treasury Bench and the universal, or almost universal, opinion of the House of Commons.

MR. BONAR LAW: We will judge that by the Division.

MR. CHURCHILL: My right hon. friend is a member of a Government which is grappling with the most terrible dangers and difficulties that any body of men were ever called upon to meet. And I say in all solemnity to him, "Do not look for quarrels; do not make them; make it easy for every party, every force in this country, to give you its aid and support, and remove barriers and obstructions and misunderstandings that tend to cause superficial and apparent divergence among men whose aim is all directed to the common object of victory, on which all our fortunes depend." I say, in conclusion, that it is not a remarkable and it is not an important thing that your military censorship should behave in an unreasonable and stupid manner. That is nothing new. We have had that often before. It is unpleasant, but not nearly so unpleasant as other things that happen in war, and it is not very important. But what is important is that the Government should deliberately adopt and make a point of principle of the clumsy and erroneous behavior of a military censor in some particular case. That is very important and very melancholy, because observe the consequence. A clumsy act of this character will be taken as a starting point for the future. It will be taken as the starting point for future acts of oppression and unreasonable and unnecessary restriction in regard to matters which are very important. I regret very much that the Government have let themselves be drawn into making this a great point of principle, when a few deft words spoken by the right hon. gentleman at Question Time to-day would have blown the whole thing into the air, and would have removed any objections and difficulties which the Government had with regard to this particular newspaper and satisfied the House of Commons, and terminated the matter on a footing of general good will. But for that purpose it is necessary that the Government should make clear that they intend to deal fairly and justly by expressions of opinion from all quarters in this country, and that they are not going to give or offer us the kind of rhetoric and argument which might do very well on public platforms, but is entirely unsuitable to the cool discussions in the House of Commons.

## Letters to the Editor.

### "THE NATION" AND THE CENSORSHIP.

SIR,—I am almost unwilling to join in what is practically an unanimous condemnation of the prohibition against THE NATION. I observe that no one in the House of Commons stood up for the Government except the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I hear on all sides that the former cut a sorry ineffectual figure. I conceive that the only explanation of the interdict of THE NATION for foreign and Colonial reading lies in two propositions, the force of which is brought home to me daily more and more. The first, that a time of war is the opportunity for fools; and the second, that censorship is an office which makes a man a fool, even when he is not born to it; and these propositions may perhaps be said to run into one, since both illustrate the fantastic tricks of man dressed in a little brief authority. I suppose THE NATION will quietly and soon be restored to ordinary freedom.—Yours, &c.,  
COURTNEY OF PENWITHE.

SIR,—I am not fully acquainted with the circumstances under which the sale of THE NATION outside Great Britain has been prohibited. But if the reason is, as it has been stated to be, that certain extracts from THE NATION have been quoted by the newspapers of enemy countries in such a way as might be detrimental to the cause of the Allies in the war, that is a reason which would, I think, equally apply to extracts from most or many newspapers, and to the reports of many speeches delivered by statesmen, not excluding the Prime Minister. I am jealous, therefore, for the freedom of the Press.—Yours, &c.,  
J. E. C. WELLDON.

SIR,—The mischief of these suppressions is that nobody knows which article is being suppressed; and wrong guesses may run through Europe with consequences undreamt of by the censors. For example, many persons thought that the export of THE NATION was forbidden because of the note on the open declarations of sympathy with the Republican solution of the Russian difficulty ventilated at the Albert Hall meeting. As everyone expects our Foreign Office to throw itself heart and soul into the work of restoring the Romanoffs as it restored the Bourbons after Waterloo, the suppression was naturally interpreted as the first move in this direction. Now it is just this Junker element in our politics that makes our relations with France, the United States, and Russia so precarious; hence nothing more unfortunate in the way of a temporary misunderstanding could have occurred. My own experience is that no censorship can be expected to supply the high quality of political judgment that can interfere with communications between London and the rest of the world without risking more harm than good. I write myself with my eye continually abroad: I expect to be quoted by the Germans and the Americans and the neutrals, and pontificate with that in view, and without the least regard for home consumption. And just because I do not write for Berlin what Bayswater likes to read, Bayswater would stop my articles if it could, and would allow nothing to be exported but those vainglorious and vituperative proclamations of the eternal righteousness of Bayswater and its willingness to patronize such districts of immoral Europe as may deserve well by supporting Baywater against the barbarism of Berlin: proclamations which, though delightful to the British palate, exasperate neutrals and foreigners to such a pitch that one finds the public opinion of the north of Europe repeatedly hardening into a conviction that of the two insufferably conceited and aggressive peoples, the English and the Germans, the Germans are to be preferred, not as being morally better, but as being more frank, and consequently less irritating, about their wickedness. If it were not for papers like THE NATION there would be no standing us. Now it is just for saving the situation in this way that THE NATION has been suppressed, whilst all the raving Jingo papers which are aggravating it, and provoking God, so to speak, are left free to provide Berlin with sidelights on England. Yet we can see plainly enough that however agreeable the articles of Reventlow may be to German patriotism, they bring Germany into contempt abroad, whilst the articles of Maximilian Harden force us to recognize the respectable and formidable elements in the German character. In precisely the same way THE NATION makes the German respect England even when a dose of extracts from the London Jingo Press has persuaded him that we are a spiteful, negligible, contemptible mob.

Under such circumstances the suppression of THE NATION's foreign circulation merely because it has admitted what all the world knows—namely, that the Germans got away very cleverly on the Somme Front, shows how hopelessly inco-ordinate a purely military censorship is. The matter had much better be left to the conscience of the Press itself. We pay a heavy price for freedom of the Press in the abuse of it; but that is not mended by curtailing the freedom all on one side. To let Lord Northcliffe

do his worst whilst refusing to let Mr. Massingham do his best (or *vice versa* if you like) is to do the one thing that is worse than shutting up the Press altogether.—Yours, &c.,

G. BERNARD SHAW.

P.S.—I am much impressed by the Government's explanation that the export of your issue of April 7th was prohibited lest your already exported issue of March 3rd should discourage the Army. After this, our gallant fellows can never again doubt the lucidity of our Organizers of Victory.—G. B. S.

SIR,—The prohibition of THE NATION's overseas sale is idiotic.—Yours, &c.,

H. G. WELLS.

SIR,—My vote is but a vote; but no Government that attacks the liberty of our Press shall ever have it. When that liberty is attacked under pretexts so flimsy as those put forward last night, men grow suspicious and will seek the real reason elsewhere.—Yours, &c.,

SIR ARTHUR QUILLER-ROUCH.

SIR,—“Do I approve the prohibition of overseas sale of THE NATION?” you ask me. Most certainly not. I did not see the particular number that excited the ire of the Army Council, but I have known this weekly review sufficiently long, together with the opinions of its editor, to feel convinced that THE NATION would never publish matter that would be hurtful to national interests. I am sure the arbitrary treatment of this organ of opinion will be unfavorably regarded in the United States. I have been in America, since the war was being waged with intensity, and I know that our millions of well-wishers in the Eastern and Central States have been exasperated by our eccentrically-directed Censorship, especially in regard to stopping the despatch to the States of reading matter—books, periodicals, and pamphlets, most of them the ordinary pabulum of loyal citizens of this country. The cast of the Army Council mind is, I fear, reflected still in the old-fashioned curricula of the Sandhurst and Woolwich examinations, with their Latin and Greek at 4,000 marks and their geography at 600.—Yours, &c.,

H. H. JOHNSTON.

SIR,—I most strongly disapprove of the War Office action.—Yours, &c.,

ARNOLD BENNETT

SIR,—Though not agreeing with the policy of peace by negotiation, I regard the prohibition of THE NATION as pure Potsdam.—Yours, &c.,

SIR ARTHUR EVANS.

SIR,—Differing wholly from THE NATION's international policy, I do not believe it ever spread practical panic to the destruction of national discipline, a sport the same Government always permits to the Northcliffe Press.—Yours, &c.,

G. K. CHESTERTON.

SIR,—The prohibition of THE NATION's overseas sale is quite foolish and dotty.—Yours, &c.,

EDWARD CARPENTER.

SIR,—I answer the question whether I approve of the prohibition of THE NATION overseas: “Good heavens! no. What reasonable being could?”—Yours, &c.,

GILBERT MURRAY.

SIR,—I regard the prohibition of the overseas NATION as most ill-advised, and hope it will be cancelled.—Yours, &c.,

JOHN GALSWORTHY.

SIR,—I think the prohibition unfair and most undesirable.—Yours, &c.,

MRS. J. R. GREEN.

SIR,—In reply to your telegram: “Do you approve of prohibition overseas sale of THE NATION?” it seems to me, so far as the facts are before me, that it is a grotesque act of fatuous tyranny. My opinions on certain questions of Government you perhaps consider reactionary. If, indeed, I were a reactionary, I ought to rejoice at this exploit of the Government, as it shows that under the representative system (Disraeli called it “a fatal drollery”), we are subject to an autocracy as arbitrary as that which has been upset in Russia, over the fall of which our Parliamentarians are uttering cries of rhapsody.

If THE NATION is fit to be read in England, if its articles on the war may be communicated to Germany by the army of spies which the Government tolerates in our midst, what harm can happen from the perusal of the whole journal, with its excellent essays on art and literature, by a select company of English-reading people abroad? The Government, instead of wasting the time of its agents in the futile diversion of censorship, would do better to utilize their energy in tracking down the cosmopolitan “hidden hand”—said to be in close contact with certain departments of the State for the benefit of the Germans and for the destruction of the power of England.

As one who differs from you on possibly more than one public question, I say emphatically that it is not opportune for the Government to oppress the newspaper Press of England at a moment when we all feel that if our politicians, and the functionaries under their orders, had acted with the intelligence and perspicacity of the majority of our journalists, we should not now be mourning the flower of our English youth.—Yours, &c.,

J. E. C. BODLEY.

SIR,—I have confidence in the Government's wisdom, and approve the prohibition of the overseas sale.—Yours, &c.,

SIR HERBERT WARREN.

SIR,—I do not approve the prohibition on THE NATION.—Yours, &c.,

L. P. JACKS.

SIR,—I most strongly disapprove.—Yours, &c.,

J. ESTLIN CARPENTER.

SIR,—In answer to the question whether I approve of the censorship of THE NATION, I answer, emphatically, “No!”—Yours, &c.,

G. W. E. RUSSELL.

SIR,—Emphatically I do not approve of the prohibition of the overseas circulation of THE NATION.—Yours, &c.,

J. A. SPENDER.

SIR,—Such a contradiction of British war aims can only be achieved by an Unintelligence Department or approved by pro-Germans.—Yours, &c.,

ISRAEL ZANGWILL.

SIR,—I have been chiefly concerned that the many Americans who, as I know, look regularly to see THE NATION, should be deprived of it, and should learn of the indefensible and, if I may say so, un-English ban on a paper of such standing.—Yours, &c.,

ELIZABETH ROBINS.

SIR,—I am convinced that in a war like this very much restriction of free speech is temporarily required; indeed, I had recently occasion to point out to Mr. C. R. Buxton that U.D.C. pamphlet No. 13, written comparatively early in the war by Norman Angell, laid this doctrine down as clearly as even the Government could wish. In each case of censorship, therefore, the problem is to me one of expediency, as it was then to Mr. Angell. And in the present case I am handicapped by the fact that, for four months past, I have had practically no time for reading any politics except the barest items of news, and therefore know no details of a case which I cannot help regretting very much. What is more, I am prepared to believe that the restriction of the overseas sale of THE NATION is a serious error of judgment, though (as you know) I do not always agree with your articles.—Yours, &c.,

G. G. COULTON.

SIR,—I do not approve of the prohibition to send THE NATION to subscribers out of the country.—Yours, &c.,

LOUISE CREIGHTON.

SIR,—The military action appears to me petulant, malicious, and characteristically ignorant. Such treatment of nearly seventy publications, small and great, constitutionally warrants the dismissal of the Secretary of State.—Yours, &c.,

SIDNEY WEBB.

SIR,—I have just received your telegram. I do not approve of the prohibition of the overseas circulation of THE NATION.—Yours, &c.,

E. W. BARNES (Master of the Temple).

SIR,—I do not approve of the prohibition.—Yours, &c.,

PHILIP WICKSTEED.

SIR,—I regret every indication that the Government is afraid of the truth and every attempt to limit or warp the interchange of ideas. As far as I can judge, the worst mistakes of this and the previous Government have arisen from a lack of trust and openness.—Yours, &c.,

T. STURGE MOORE.

SIR,—The extreme folly of any department of His Majesty's Government in forbidding the overseas sale of THE NATION is patent to all, and will receive the indignant reprobation of all who care for our reputation, and are real lovers of liberty.—Yours, &c.,

JOHN CLIFFORD.

SIR,—I think the Government's action calls for fuller explanation.—Yours, &c.,

SIR EDWARD RUSSELL.

SIR,—I strongly disapprove of prohibition of the overseas sale of THE NATION, and shall take every opportunity of saying so.—Yours, &c.,

SIR W. ROBERTSON NICOLL.

SIR,—I read with amazement and indignation the announcement that the overseas sale of THE NATION had been stopped. Apart altogether from the value of the contents of the paper, of which I have a very high opinion, it is intolerable that the War Office should arrogate to itself, under cover of an Act of Parliament never passed for any such purpose, the right to suppress opinions not acceptable to the official mind. It would be well that the Prime Minister should apply to the management of the departments of Government some of the principles of liberty he can so eloquently express.—Yours, &c.,

ALFRED E. GARVIE.

SIR,—I do not approve of the prohibition of the overseas sale of THE NATION.—Yours, &c.,

SIR EDWARD FRY.

SIR,—I cannot recall any articles in your paper the tendency of which would be to hearten the enemy, or from which he could gain information not better supplied by our daily Press, which, no doubt, he sees and studies. To prohibit its sale anywhere seems to me as fatuous in its aim as it is obscurantist in character.—Yours, &c.,

EDWARD CLODD.

SIR,—The prohibition of the overseas sale of THE NATION seems to me ridiculous.—Yours, &c.,

LAURENCE BINYON.

SIR,—I have not seen anything in THE NATION that was not worth serious attention. Officers and men back from the Front have been much more outspoken, and they have never been threatened with the loss of their tongues.—Yours, &c.,

W. H. DAVIES.

SIR,—I strongly disapprove of the prohibition.—Yours, &c.,

OLIVE SCHREINER.

SIR,—The action of the Government in restricting the circulation of THE NATION appears to me to be a denial of the very principles for which we are fighting, and moreover, if viewed merely from the point of view of expediency, to be stupid and short-sighted. For it will weaken the national confidence in their leadership, and will breed distrust of an integrity of purpose among our Allies in Russia and America. If Members of Parliament are fully alive to their responsibilities, they will not allow the matter to pass unchallenged, but will insist upon the Prime Minister's explaining how this infringement of the rights of free speech accords with his reiterated pronouncements on the virtues of the democratic ideal.—Yours, &c.,

E. DE SELINCOURT.

SIR,—In reply to your inquiry, my best bad language is at your service in protest against a stupidity of action which in certain Government departments seems to have become normal. In the brain-cells of our bureaucrats Germany seems already to have won the war.—Yours, &c.,

LAURENCE HOUSMAN.

SIR,—I do not approve.—Yours, &c.,

H. DE VERE STACPOOLE.

SIR,—Having seen your letter in the "Times" stating that the foreign circulation of THE NATION had been suppressed, I read with the greatest care last week's issue.

I saw nothing in it which could justify such action; neither have I noticed, as a regular subscriber to your paper, anything in it beyond the ordinary criticisms upon the Prime Minister and his Government which are the commonplaces and the justification of constitutional Government.

To attempt to conceal the fact that there is criticism is not so much malevolent as it is stupid, and if it is true that the Censor rather than the Cabinet is responsible for the stoppage of the foreign circulation of your paper, his action is only on a par with former and similar stupidities.

If, however, the Government is so thin-skinned that it can live upon nothing but praise, and resents criticism such as you have indulged in, it has only taken another step on the road of Dictatorship along which it has travelled ever since its inception.

I can but hope that when Parliament meets it may express a decided opinion upon this attempt to restrict a political freedom of speech, which is in no way injurious to the military interests of the country, and which may be an awkward and dangerous precedent in other circumstances and times.—Yours, &c.,

SIR CHARLES HOBHOUSE.

SIR,—It is with considerable astonishment that I learn that the foreign circulation of THE NATION has been suppressed by order of the Government under the powers given them by the Defence of the Realm Act.

Surely it is necessary that an energetic protest should be made against this further infringement of liberty. We have seen one by one all our ancient rights taken away or curtailed, but why it should be deemed necessary to prevent our Allies

knowing the state of public opinion in this country is almost incomprehensible to any sane man, and especially after the many statements we have had from Ministers that this war is being fought for Freedom and Democracy.

It is not that your paper is accused of having published seditious matter, because in such a case the Government would obviously have suppressed it altogether, or have prosecuted the writer of the article complained of; the only possible explanation must be that this Government dislikes the free expression of any sentiment which is not one of fulsome adulation of itself—unless, indeed, the sentiment be expressed by Lord Northcliffe, of whom Mr. Lloyd George and his Ministers appear to be afraid—and is determined, if it can, to reduce Great Britain to the position occupied by Russia before the Revolution.

The effect on public opinion abroad will, of course, be deplorable, and probably very misleading, but demagogues are not accustomed to consider a small point like that, provided they can maintain themselves in office and authority.—Yours, &c.,

RICHARD C. LAMBERT.

SIR,—There can surely be only one opinion as to the prohibition of the foreign circulation of THE NATION. It is a monstrously high-handed action, and as stupid as it is arbitrary and unjust.—Yours, &c.,

SIR GEORGE GREENWOOD.

SIR,—I entirely disapprove of the stopping of the foreign circulation of THE NATION, and will join in any protest in the House or elsewhere.—Yours, &c.,

JOSIAH C. WEDGWOOD.

SIR,—I was greatly surprised to see that such a well-established and widely read organ as THE NATION should have been suppressed for foreign circulation by order of the Government; in fact, I am loth to believe that there should exist any serious justification for such an extreme course to have been taken, and I am in hopes that it may yet be found that some mistake has been made. We value the freedom of the Press as one of our most cherished possessions, and I am confident that when Parliament reassembles next week Members will ask for a full and clear statement to be made of the reasons for which it has been considered necessary for the Government to have taken such drastic measures.—Yours, &c.,

SIR STEPHEN COLLINS.

SIR,—May I be permitted to state how thoroughly I share what I conceive to be the universal surprise and regret with which Liberals must have learnt that the Government have thought fit to suppress the foreign circulation of THE NATION? You have throughout dealt with the vast and complex issues involved in the present international struggle with such conspicuous sanity and clarity that it is difficult to conceive what grounds even the notorious ineptitude of the Censor or the ingrained reactionary instincts of Conservative satesmen such as Lord Curzon, Lord Milner, and Mr. Bonar Law could discover for this extraordinary exercise of the power and authority of the War Cabinet. His countrymen find it almost impossible to associate the Prime Minister with action of this nature. In his Radical days he was so strenuous a supporter of the principle of free speech, to which the Welsh people are so traditionally and instinctively attached, that it is most difficult to believe that he desires in any way to curtail the most complete freedom of thought and speech, whether favorable or adverse to the existing Ministry.

The action is doubly inopportune when America by its virtual unanimity demonstrates so strikingly the invaluable fruition of popular discussion, really phenomenal in its range and scope; and Russia achieves within one short week the frank exposition and enunciation of the real views of its people, thereby effecting an instant solution of some of the most intractable factors in the situation. It must be obvious to all that the granting of real autonomy to Finland, the creation of a united and independent Poland, and the neutralization, rather than the transfer to Russia, of Constantinople and the Dardanelles, eminently make for an early and abiding peace.

With these inspiring examples before us, it is profoundly to be hoped that the Prime Minister will forthwith re-establish in Great Britain real freedom of the Press in substitution for the inspired and controlled condition which has so long obtained. He will find therein a readier road to the cessation of the present calamitous conflict than by the multiplication of munitions of war, unhappily so tragically ineffective in the present dire economic struggle, already gravely trenching upon the comfort and sustenance of the masses of the population, with apparently every prospect of this lamentable condition being further continuously and progressively aggravated.—Yours, &c.,

EDW. T. JOHN.

SIR,—The official reason given for placing restraint upon THE NATION has increased one's indignation at a tyrannical



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### The influence of "The Nation"

*Speaking in the House of Commons on Tuesday, April 17th,*

COMMANDER J. WEDGWOOD, D.S.O., M.P., said:—

"When I was in the United States recently, I had a conversation with Colonel House, who said that the papers which he read as representing opinion in this country were THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN and THE NATION. . . . Everybody in America seems to read THE NATION."

MR. EDWARD G. HEMMERDE, K.C., M.P., said:—

"Here is a paper which you find in the hands of every thinking man who understands English at all in Petrograd. I am not speaking only of civilians, but also of soldiers and admirals, who are far more democratic than the soldiers and admirals in this country."

interference with liberty to speak judiciously in the national interest.

The reason given would justify suppression of even the official reports of the House of Commons debate. It should have meant, long ago, the suppression of newspapers, extensively used for German propaganda without any interference from the Army authorities.—Yours, &c.,

J. R. CLYNES.

SIR,—Among the many letters in your last issue expressing sympathy with you, and disapproval of the Government's action in regard to *THE NATION*, I cannot find one from any Conservative. I see no reason why freedom of speech and of the Press should not be as dear to a Conservative as to the most advanced Radical. It is in the best interests of us all. If you publish that which is treasonable, or contrary to the country's cause in this crisis, there are the Defence of the Realm Acts and Courts, under and before which you can be arraigned. This would be a constitutional, the other is a despotic process. If you care for such an expression of sympathy and regret from a political opponent, accept this from one of the most unimportant of Conservatives.—Yours, &c.,

SIR JOHN EDWARDS-MOSS.

SIR,—We are told that *THE NATION* was suppressed because it encouraged the enemy. This was the line taken by the Tory Government during the Boer War, against which and for the right of free speech Mr. Lloyd George fought bravely. As I write these lines there stands before me a cartoon by F. C. Gould, entitled, "Toujours Silence." It is dated December 5th, 1900, and consists of four sketches, in which Mr. Chamberlain, Sir John Brodrick, and the "Times" are caricatured. The following are the quotations that appear under the respective sketches:—

- (1) September, 1899: "Hold your tongue whilst negotiations are going on, or you'll encourage Kruger."
- (2) September, 1900: "Hold your tongue whilst the war is going on; it's unpatriotic to want to know anything."
- (3) October, 1900: "Hold your tongue whilst the elections are on, or I'll call you a traitor and a pro-Boer."
- (4) December, 1900: "Hold your tongue, do, or you'll encourage De Wet."—Yours, &c.,

ARTHUR ARONSON.

The Mill House, Chipperfield, King's Langley.

#### THE PROPOSED CHANGES IN THE PRUSSIAN CONSTITUTION.

SIR,—*THE NATION* is so widely read among Liberals that I hope you will allow me to call attention to some serious omissions in your references to the German situation in this week's number.

You speak of the Kaiser's manifesto proposing changes in the Prussian Constitution as a "plan of democratic reform." What is that manifesto? It is a royal instruction by the King of Prussia to his Ministers, who are responsible to him alone, to prepare a measure to alter, in a more or less democratic direction, the composition of the Upper House and the franchise for the election of the Lower. This royal instruction emphasizes the fact that, however "democratic" the changes may be, the final seat of power is, and will remain, with the King alone. Surely the very basis of the traditional Prussian system is that, however the Parliament may be constituted, the Government is not responsible to it, but only to the King. To find a parallel in our own history we must go back behind 1688. It is no help to the cause of democracy in Germany to overestimate the Kaiser's democratic intentions, and to describe as a real plan of democratic reform what is at the best a change in a relatively inessential part of the political system of Prussia.

In your remarks on the Imperial Constitution, you also ignore this crucial question of responsible government. The lack of responsibility is the more disastrous in the Imperial Government, because it means that the united Army and Navy of the Empire are not controlled by the Imperial Parliament, but (except for certain formal concessions to the Bavarian Crown in peace time) by the Kaiser. It is this, and not, as you say, the Prussian franchise, which is the fact on which "all the current indictments of Prussian militarism rest."

If your readers care to convince themselves of this, they have only to look up Bismarck's speeches on the Army Bills of 1866-7, or the account of the controversy on the subject in the 'sixties and early months of 1870, given, from a Liberal point of view, in Sir Robert Morier's "Memoirs," or Delbrück's "Regierung und Volkswille," published early in 1914, in the course of which the writer remarks (p. 136) that "it would take another Sedan, inflicted on us instead of by us, before they (our officers and generals) would acquiesce in the control of the Army by the German Parliament."

I keenly sympathize with the spirit in which you refer to the German people. Nothing is more important just now than that we should discard vindictive and insular notions, and try to understand the real temper and the real situation of the German people. But we shall not bring our Liberalism to bear

effectively upon that situation by ignoring vital facts, nor, I am sure, would *THE NATION* knowingly mislead its readers.—Yours, &c.,

DEMOCRAT.

[We may have been too sanguine, but of course we desire to state exactly the effect of the proposed change in the Prussian Constitution.—Ed., *THE NATION*.]

#### EDWARD THOMAS.

SIR,—No one who values literature as it is valued in your paper would wish the death of my friend, Lieutenant Edward Thomas, R.G.A., to pass unnoticed and unlamented. For he was one of the few masters of English prose.

Some fifteen or sixteen years ago, when, in the intervals of peace, I was working on the "Daily Chronicle," and trying to maintain the high level to which you had raised its literary page, he suddenly appeared unannounced, and with almost speechless modesty asked for work, deprecating his capacity like one who invites refusal. He had lately left Oxford, where he was a scholar of Lincoln, and, I think, while still an undergraduate, had married the daughter of the critic, Ashcroft Noble. Out of work he looked for certain, and I have always thought with pleasure of the happy fortune which thus brought us together. For in him I found, as I at once perceived, an excellent writer, upon whom one could absolutely rely.

Since then he has written many books, full of personal charm, and marked by the distinction of a meditative but beautiful spirit. I do not know that any of them gained popular success, for his was a shy and fastidious nature, not so much despising popular arts as incapable of them. He was a scholar in the highest sense, possessed by a passionate delight in the finest literature, especially Latin and English literature, but only in the finest, and unerring in his judgment. Full of knowledge, and illuminated by a quietly humorous observation as his books nearly always were, to me the most attractive is still his volume on Oxford, written round pictures by the architectural artist, John Fulleylove, another friend gone. It reveals all his elusive qualities by glimpses, and gains from its subject a definition and concrete reality, sometimes just wanting to his reflective and literary mood. But, after all, perhaps it was his deep and quiet love of nature—the nature of Southern and Western England—which drew me to him most.

He always professed himself incapable of writing stories or describing action. Indeed, he was a born essayist. When, early in the war, he enlisted as a private in the Artists' Rifles, I thought the experience of active life, and an association with ordinary men would add a decisiveness and human reality to his writing; and I believe it was so. But he transferred into the Royal Garrison Artillery, and now has been killed in action, leaving his best work unaccomplished, his finest powers unfulfilled. Yet his name will stand beside Rupert Brooke's and "Saki's" upon the list of noble spirits and admirable writers of whom this war has deprived our country.—Yours, &c.,

HENRY W. NEVINSON.

National Liberal Club.

[We have also received a large number of semi-private messages from Members of Parliament regretting that our own telegram did not reach them in time for our last week's number. These letters we now publish as supplementary to those printed last week.—Ed., *THE NATION*.]

### Poetry.

#### KILLED IN ACTION.

(EDWARD THOMAS.)

HAPPY the man whose home is still  
In Nature's green and peaceful ways;  
To wake and hear the birds so loud,  
That scream for joy to see the sun  
Is shouldering past a sullen cloud.

And we have known those days, when we  
Would wait to hear the cuckoo first;  
When you and I, with thoughtful mind,  
Would help a bird to hide her nest,  
For fear of other hands less kind.

But thou, my friend, art lying dead:  
War, with its hell-born childishness,  
Has claimed thy life, with many more:  
The man that loved this England well,  
And never left it once before.

W. H. DAVIES.

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AN article by M. Adolphe Bossert in a recent number of the "Revue Bleue," has led me to re-read some of the novels of Erckmann-Chatrian, and to speculate about the mystery of literary collaboration. These two writers, after getting more praise than they deserved, are now unduly neglected. Part of their success came from their opposition to Napoleonic ideas and exalted notions of "la gloire," and Sainte-Beuve went so far as to call the novels that deal with Joseph Bertha, an "Iliad of fear." This is a great injustice, for if Erckmann and Chatrian painted the horrors of war, they have also given us a wonderful picture of the domestic life of Alsace, and were to some extent pioneers in the regionalist movement in literature. But the puzzling thing about their work is the fact that though each of them failed when working by himself, yet they were so completely successful in collaboration. A law-suit which followed the rupture of their thirty years of partnership let the public into the secret of how they worked. Each wrote just as he was inspired; his partner was then at liberty to strike out and re-write at will. The draft thus produced was submitted to the first collaborator for revision and change, but with the understanding that nothing which had been rejected would be again introduced. It sounds simple, yet it is a long way from explaining why two separate failures could make a united success. There must have been some quality in the partnership which was not possessed by either of the partners.

COLLABORATION is only satisfactory when the resulting work ceases to be a mechanical mixture and becomes a chemical compound. Even the collaborators themselves do not always understand how this is done. "As a rule, in collaborations," said Andrew Lang, "one man does the work while the other looks on." This would be pleasant for the sleeping collaborator, so to speak, but it is not the case with most successful collaborations. Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, for example, could not decide how much each brought to the common achievement, and they thought so much alike on most subjects that sometimes when they were sitting at work at the same table, they wrote almost the same sentence at the same moment. In this case the success of the collaboration came from the likeness between the collaborators. In another instance, it came from their difference. Mrs. Praed has described the method by which the novels were produced which she wrote in partnership with Justin McCarthy: "We talk the matter over first, and make a scheme. Then we sketch out chapter by chapter. I write the bones of the chapters I think I can do most easily, and Mr. McCarthy does the same. Every sentence is joint work. I really don't know which is which, and now I wouldn't work in any other way. You see our lives are so entirely different that we look at things differently."

ANOTHER famous collaboration was that of Besant and Rice. It is believed that in the books bearing the two names, Rice only wrote with his own pen the first couple of chapters of "Ready Money Mortiboy." Whether this be the case or not, Rice was certainly more than a sleeping partner in the firm, for the books that Besant wrote after Rice's death are very different in manner from those produced by the collaboration. Besant held that it was absolutely essential to a successful collaboration that one

of the partners should be supreme, and should give the final revision to the whole work, if, indeed, he did not write it afresh. Besant, by the way, advised the beginning novelist to get the help of a woman:—

"I would advise him to find among his friends—cousins, sisters—a girl, intelligent, sympathetic, and quick; a girl who will lend him her ear, listen to his plot, and discuss his characters. She should be a girl of quick imagination, who does not, or cannot write: there are many such girls. When he has confided to her his characters all in the rough, with the part they have to play all in the rough, he may reckon on presently getting all back again, but advanced. The figures will go back to their creator distinct and clear, no longer shivering unclothed, but made up and dressed for the stage. Merely by talking with this girl, everything that was chaotic has fallen into order; the characters, dim and shapeless, have become alive, full-grown, articulate. As in everyday life, so in imaginative work, woman is man's best partner—the most generous, the least exacting, the most certain never to quarrel over her share of the work, her share of the glory, her share of the pay."

Such an Egeria as Besant describes would make novel-writing, like shaving with a certain brand of soap, a positive pleasure.

FRANCE is the great land of collaboration, especially in the drama, and one thinks at once of such partnerships as Scribe and Legouvé, Scribe and Labiche, Meilhac and Halévy, Augier and Sandeau. It is notable that France has produced quite a number of cases of fraternal collaboration. In addition to the Goncourts, whom I have already mentioned, there are the brothers Marguerite, the brothers Rosny, and the brothers Tharaud, all three (or, rather, all six) of whom are in the front rank of contemporary French novelists. English novelists are more individualist, though Dickens joined with Wilkie Collins in writing "No Thoroughfare," and Mr. Conrad worked for some time in partnership with Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer. On the other hand, we can point to the collaboration of two sisters in the case of Miss Jane and Miss Mary Findlater. Dumas was, of course, the greatest of collaborators, but in his case the lesser writer was swallowed up in the greater, and Maquet's unaided work shows how far he fell short of Dumas. Thackeray regretted that he had not a Maquet to do the subsidiary parts of his novels. He would have given much, he declared, for a competent and rapid clerk to whom he might say:—

"Mr. Jones, if you please, the archbishop must die this morning in about five pages. Turn to article 'Dropsy' (or what you will) in Encyclopedia. Take care there are no medical errors in his death. Group daughters, physicians, and chaplains round him. . . . Color with local coloring. When I come back to dress for dinner, the archbishop is dead on my table in five pages: medicine, topography, theology, all right, and Jones has gone home to his family some hours."

COLLABORATION has been compared with marriage, and it is true that some literary collaborators "fought bitter and regular like man and wife." There are, moreover, collaborators monogamous and collaborators polygamous. Fletcher wrote with Massinger even while Beaumont was alive. Chapman joined with Ben Jonson, Marston, and Shirley; while Decker worked with Ford, Webster, Massinger, and Middleton. In fact, the Elizabethan age was also the age when collaboration was most frequent, perhaps because the drama was then the favorite literary form, and the drama invites collaboration. It is likely that a census of plays would show that a majority have been the result of partnerships. A one-act play was produced in Paris in 1811, which was the work of no fewer than twenty-four dramatists, and the flimsiest London revue requires quite a team of authors to produce its poor jokes and its inane dialogue. But when it comes to really great literature, collaboration always fails. The "Iliad" may be a composite production, but if so, it is rather an organic growth than a collaboration in the proper sense of the word. Nobody can imagine an association of writers attempting to produce a work on the lines of "Paradise Lost." For authors who do not aim so high, Andrew Lang's advice is well worth following: "Find an ingenious, and industrious, and successful partner; stick to him, never quarrel with him, and do not survive him."

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And, indeed, in so far as it is possible to convey personality and (in Mr. Balfour's words) "that which made immediate and irresistible appeal to every man and woman whom he met," Mrs. Lyttelton has succeeded in conveying some of it into a narrative which should long survive the biography of the transitory "successful" man of the age. If there were any cause to criticize it would be that perhaps she too much emphasizes the periods of sorrow and depression in a life distinguished above all others—to those who came in contact with it—for a kind of radiance and seeming serenity of mind. Of necessity, however, she had to deal with a series of outward tragedies in which the man most clearly revealed his inner and deep springs of being: the death of his sister, of his father, of his first wife, of his brother, of his children. And, above all, in all such records as these of men who live for the most part "in the sunshine," surrounded by honor and affection and troops of friends, there is always the overshadowing tragedy of the end: an end, as it seemed to those who loved him, in this case premature and cruel. There is also a note of depression and of an almost exaggerated diffidence which must come as a revelation to those who merely knew him in the zest and sparkle of conversation, or as an athletic champion, the idol of the crowd, or as the life and soul of a country-house party or of a dull political dinner.

He was born the youngest of twelve children, almost all of whom were to be called to high service in Church and State. With his brothers he swept all athletic achievements at Eton, and again at Cambridge. His brilliant style at cricket and football gave him an unbounded popularity; and from the beginning he tasted that intoxication of adoration and success, which nothing equals in after-life, of the man who can win victory in sport for his school, his university, his country, his country. His letters reveal how much he appreciated the danger of such a triumph, and how he strove to retain intellectual interests and a standard of right judgment and humility against the heady worship which comes to the successful athlete. He passed to London, where once more his natural charm opened all doors to him, and his company was welcome throughout all the society of the successful. He worked hard at his profession, and although he was never a great advocate, he would have made a conspicuously fair and enlightened judge. His first marriage to Laura Tennant was a splendor and a tragedy: his second marriage, to Edith Balfour, brought him long years of unbroken happiness. His political career was stormy, and came to a premature end. He died at the age of fifty-six, still extraordinarily young, after a great fight for life, bearing immense suffering with immense fortitude. "It's been a rough passage," he said at the end. "But I've made a good fight, haven't I?" "To lose well," he had said in his last publicly spoken words, "is as good as a win."

To discuss Alfred Lyttelton's political career is to discuss questions still exciting feelings of bitterness and controversy. Perhaps Mrs. Lyttelton would have done better not to have entered into these historic sections of her narrative, or to have attempted dealing with such subjects as Home Rule, Chinese Labor, Tariff Reform, and similar stimulants of violence and passion. History will in time deliver its verdict on all such changes and policies—quite indifferent to the pleadings of any particular biographer. Alfred Lyttelton, brought up as a Liberal, and for many years honestly believing himself to be a convinced adherent of the party led by his uncle, Mr. Gladstone, suddenly discovered that he must enter politics on the other side. Home Rule was then (in 1894) the sole question at issue; and he found that he could not accept it. That it was a genuine conversion is undoubted. His whole instinct led him to sympathy with the Irish landowners, and to antipathy against the agrarian revolt which was the motive power of Home Rule. His brother-in-law had been brutally assassinated in Phoenix Park; and, as his letters printed in this volume show, his fastidious taste was revolted by all the manoeuvres and demonstrations in Parliament by which alone the representatives of the Irish people compelled a complacent and indifferent British public to realize that an Irish problem existed. Against these influences only Mr. Gladstone's dominating personality kept him a Liberal. His political creed seems to have crumbled away as completely as in the case of those who suddenly wake up to the fact that they no longer believe in the existence of God or the immortality of the human spirit. It must be acknowledged that no more unfortunate time could be imagined for such a realization. The favorite nephew (almost a son) came to confess and abjure a faith which had become a religion to the old statesman just at the moment when he was retiring, defeated, from a strife where he had wrestled with centuries of injustice and stupidity. The younger man came to declare that he must desert the losing and adhere to the obviously winning side. He came to abjure that creed immediately after he had received a prominent political and legal appointment from the very Government he was repudiating. And he came in person to confess this desertion at a Christmas party at Hawarden when all the family had gathered to console a man who had fought at an age normally beyond the limits of human endeavor, a fight desperate and magnificent, for a cause which he believed was vital to the country's welfare and its honor. Small wonder that the statesman himself was at first overcome by that confession, and only after a time changed reproach into charity and affection, or that his clan, as Mrs. Lyttelton asserts, "could hardly be more severe if he had been caught putting poison in Mr. Gladstone's tea-cup."

His political career, thus unfortunate in its inception, was equally unfortunate in its climax. Ten years after he was dragged from the back benches into the Cabinet to defend Lord Milner's policy in South Africa. His name became associated with the squalid intrigue of Chinese Labor importation into the Transvaal, now only an evil dream of days long dead. It became associated also with the so-called "Lyttelton Constitution," devised by Lord Milner, swept away by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, which if it had ever come into operation would infallibly have lost South Africa for all time to the British Crown. A man naturally full of charm and courtesy, personally popular, with kindness and simplicity and transparent honesty, he appeared, under the pressure of the defence of an impossible situation, querulous, irritable, disingenuous, ineffective. No statesman, however high his eloquence or experience, could have set up an adequate defence of these measures of a Government discredited and dying. It was the hardest of luck that Alfred Lyttelton should have been compelled to plunge into this particular controversy. The verdict, delivered with great good humor by General Seely in a letter here printed, was the verdict of all: "I am angry because each time it is brought home to me that no other man in the House of Commons could possibly have carried through the policy which I hate. You stand there the embodiment of everything which is good and honest and straightforward, and so you defeat us."

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depression as to the future, and, as Mrs. Lyttelton here reveals, with a haunting sense of failure. He could not believe that his party would ever return to power, or that the new spirit enthroned would not sweep away most of the things for which he most cared. Yet as a matter of fact in these later Parliaments he captured the attention of the House of Commons, and enlisted its sympathies far more when in opposition than when in office. He had little capacity, indeed, for playing the party game, for quickness and strategy in debate, or for sententious repetition of arguments which had been stated and re-stated on the great controversial questions dividing the historic political parties. But in these later years he had fuller opportunity for speaking his mind on matters which the party controversy swept by. And in such matters all the strongest and most attractive elements of his character were revealed. He was undoubtedly increasing his reputation and influence in this advocacy of human causes in the days before he died.

He will remain as a figure of the best type of a class which was passing before the war began, a class which the war is destined to sweep away. "He, perhaps of all men of his generation"—as Mr. Asquith described him in a fine tribute to his memory—"came nearest to the mould and ideal of manhood which every English father would like to see his son aspire to, and, if possible, to attain." It was the best type of the old historic landed aristocracy: kindly landlords, the friendliest relationship with tenants and neighbors, public school and university success, brilliant athletic achievements, intellectual interests, delight in conversation, and the life of country houses and the London season, clean, capable, with a high ideal of service and of generous friendship. It was feudalism at its best before its death, as found in (say) the finest families of the Southern States of America before the flood came and destroyed them all. And in England to-day the flood has come and has destroyed them all. No better record could be provided for a future age than this life of a man so greatly loved by a whole generation, a personality whose courtesy, chivalry, capacities for friendship, enriched the society in which he moved, and were carried with him triumphant to the grave.

#### THE NEW SPIRIT IN GERMANY.

"Inside the German Empire." By H. B. SWOPE. With a Preface by EX-AMBASSADOR GERARD. (Constable. 5s. net.)

THERE is in most of us a vein of romance which insists that the unknown is necessarily strange. For nearly three years the German Empire has been closed to us as rigidly as Thibet, and we are apt to fancy that behind the veil of secrecy there must be something wonderful and abnormal. Two schools of "neutral observers" have played upon our weakness. There is the pro-German neutral of the Sven Hedin type, who paints his heroic canvases in a mood of garrulous simplicity. The other kind of "neutral" has been more in evidence in our own Press, and we have had from several astute persons panoramas of starvation and incipient revolt, drawn to specification, and designed to meet a commercial demand. Mr. Swope belongs to neither of these classes. He is the honest neutral—that is to say, he was an American who felt as an American, and wrote for American readers. He was in close touch with the American Embassy in Berlin: he had the advantage of hearing fully what German statesmen wished to say. He saw something of the Somme Battle from the German side, and he was able to compare his impressions of the internal condition and mental outlook of the German people in the autumn of 1916, with those of a previous visit early in the war. He writes simply, and calls himself, with engaging modesty, a "reporter." Of himself he hardly ever speaks, and this self-suppression, which contrasts pleasantly with the manners of some much-advertised "neutrals," impresses us favorably. He has the first quality of a good observer: he is more interested in the world which he went to see than in his own experiences or reflections. For what "personal equation" must he allow? Mr. Swope is certainly a Liberal but though his sympathies are with the Allies, he is no blind partisan; we detect neither the bias of an uncritical admiration for Germany (though he finds some things to admire and praise), nor of a temperamental dislike (though

he has much to say about German hostility to America). In short, we take Mr. Swope to be one of the rarest beings alive during this war, an honest neutral, and a capable observer. Mr. Gerard has furnished his book with a warm recommendation, and we may take it as a competent reflection of the expert American diplomatic view.

Mr. Swope insists that Germany will never capitulate to "victory terms": he is equally sure that the creation of a democratic Germany is a certainty, and may conceivably happen before the end of the war. Mr. Swope refrains from giving good advice to the Allies, nor does he speculate in any detail on possible terms. He bids us see this nation as it is—"seventy millions of people, and not a quitter among them." The impression which he carried away with him was "the fixity of intention of gaining an honorable peace or suffering defeat." He declares that even the Minority Socialists are not for peace at any price; they also speak invariably of "an honorable peace." He does not believe that the possibility of surrendering Alsace-Lorraine has yet been considered, though on this point some Americans who should have the means of knowing the truth, believe that part of Lorraine will be, or has been, offered. For the rest, he tells us that (rhetoric apart) the ruling classes at least would deliberately prefer destruction to humiliating surrender, because the latter course would involve for them the more disastrous consequences at home. He believes that women would be enrolled as combatants before an invader could threaten Berlin. That is one-half of his diagnosis. The other half is that the impulse of conquest long ago died down. The motto is no longer *siegen* (conquer), but *durchhalten* (hold out), and the spirit of domination has given way to the spirit which fights for existence. He represents the officers of the army in Belgium and France as particularly resolute against projects of annexation.

As to the liberalizing of Germany, Mr. Swope is an optimist. Writing last autumn, he saw the beginnings of the tendency which has since been openly confessed by the Chancellor and the Kaiser. So little does he expect revolution that he does not even pause to discuss it. The Kaiser, indeed, has become a popular and sympathetic figure during the war. "I could not find one single dissonant note in the chorus of support, sympathy, admiration, and affection that the Kaiser's name always calls out." The hope for him, therefore, lies not in revolution, but in a more or less spontaneous democratic transformation. On this subject Mr. Swope had many talks with Herr Zimmermann, the present Foreign Secretary, a man of popular origin and directness of mind, whom he regards as the coming man of the Empire. Herr Zimmermann believed that the principle of the Chancellor's responsibility to the Reichstag would be adopted, and with it a genuine Cabinet system. He made one interesting reservation, however. He thought that the model for the Chancellor's office would be found rather in the position of the American President than in that of the British Premier. He would not be liable to fall after every adverse vote in the Reichstag, but "in the creation of the new form of governmental responsibility there should be given to the Government a fixed tenure of office similar to that which America possesses, where the Cabinet is emplaced for four years." This may have been only Herr Zimmermann's personal idea: since Mr. Swope wrote, a Committee of the Reichstag has been appointed to report on the whole subject. What Herr Zimmermann did confidently expect was a formal revision of the German Constitution with the consent of the Kaiser and the other federal sovereigns. Mr. Swope does not confidently predict any considerable change during the war, though even this, he insists, is not impossible. The obstacles in the way are, first, that the concentration of power is thought to work well for the conduct of war, and that "swopping horses" is dreaded while crossing a stream; and, secondly, that a change during war would be hailed by the Allies as a victory. As to this, Herr Zimmermann spoke decidedly:—

"The fact that our enemies are talking of forcing internal reforms upon us would make it seem as if such reforms would be a price of peace, and while we are anxious for the changes to come, we want them to come at our will and not under duress or coercion."

None the less, there are influential Germans (and Mr. Swope seems to reckon the Kaiser among them) who see

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### APRIL. THE QUARTERLY REVIEW

THE INDUSTRIAL MOVEMENT IN INDIA. By W. H. MORELAND, C.S.I., C.I.E.  
THE RURAL PROSPERITY OF FRANCE. By ROSAMOND J. SPEDDING.  
THE TRAVELS OF SIR JOHN MANDEVILLE. By Prof. PAUL HAMELIUS (of Liège).  
OLD AND NEW IN THE DAILY PRESS. By T. H. S. ESCOTT.  
THE FOREIGN POLICY OF ITALY. By WILLIAM MILLER.  
THE ORIGINS OF THE FRANCO-GERMAN WAR. By J. REINACH.  
CYPRUS UNDER BRITISH RULE. By Sir JOHN PAGE MIDDLETON.  
AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATION IN GERMANY. By LIONEL SMITH-GORDON.

THE MUSIC OF WILD FLOWERS. By the Rev. Canon VAUGHAN.  
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THE FLEETS OF OUR ALLIES. By ARCHIBALD HURD.  
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### THE RUSSIAN RED CROSS

can do, by so much more will Russian energy and Russian brains be liberated to prosecute the object of the allied nations, the crushing of the common foe. Therefore every additional sovereign given to the Fund means the release of another fraction of the mighty pressure exerted on our heroically, and to all who feel compassion for the broken men and women, and starving children—victims of the German war-god—an earnest appeal is made to send what help they can to

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in these internal changes a road to peace, and may attempt to travel it with peace as their goal.

There is much that is of interest in this book beyond these central impressions on which Mr. Swope insists. His account of the chivalrous German flying men is pleasant reading. His fear that Germany, Russia, and Japan may, after the war, make "a Dreibund of discontent," has lost its edge since the Russian Revolution. He tells us that the old bitterness towards England has given way in great measure to "a feeling not unmixed with admiration for the way she is fighting." This time, in agreement with a curious series of letters in the "Times," he reports that Belgium is relatively comfortable, much more so than, unhappily, the North of France, and is better fed than Germany itself. None the less, Mr. Swope will not admit that the Germans are starving (he wrote last autumn). The dearth of food causes "inconvenience, though not to the extent of threatening health." The really tragic case he considers to be Poland. Mr. Swope warns us that while we are speculating on the political future of Poland, the Polish race is fast disappearing. The children suffer worst of all. In some districts there are none left alive under the age of five, and elsewhere the growing babies are too weak to learn to walk. Tuberculosis works especial havoc. Mr. Swope writes with no obvious intention. He draws no moral, and he frames no exhortations.

#### SAMPLES.

"Mr. Justice Driver." By B. PAUL NEUMAN. (Hodder & Stoughton. 5s. net.)

"What Lies Beneath." By BENJAMIN SWIFT. (Chapman & Hall. 5s. net.)

"Changing Winds." By ST. JOHN G. ERVINE. (Maunsell. 6s. net.)

MR. NEUMAN cannot be called an exciting, a speculative, or an original novelist. If you walk along the high-road of fiction, you are sure to meet him. But he has none of the evasions, pretences, imitativeness, and mechanics of the average novelist—as he really is. He is rather the average novelist as he ought to be, and as you would like him to be. If he is not greatly distinguished, he can tell a story competently and readably; if he lacks power, he does not lack feeling or sincerity; and if inspiration be wanting, he has a good eye for inventing, sorting, and grouping a creditable company of characters. And, above all, he is a worker, and so vigilant to keep the imp of shoddy from stealing upon him. The present tale is an account of Mark Driver's rise to the Bench, and Mr. Neuman gives a skilful picture of the accession of a particularly coarse, brutal, and ruthless egoist to fame. The minor figures reflect just the right amount of light and shade upon him, forming in their individual tempers a happy proportion both of criticism of, and reaction from, Mark Driver's vulgarity. Such collected and sensible work deserves the appreciation which its proper lack of gaudy decoration does not always procure for it.

"What Lies Beneath" is one of those infrequent novels upon which it is impossible to give a verdict. It is wretchedly constructed; full of harsh transitions and irrelevancies; incapable of putting together even plausible sketches of character; and the plot turns almost exclusively upon the point whether a young officer, Sebastian Raven-dale, is really in love with his half-sister rather than his step-sister. It is hardly within reason to write a novel upon such a theme without falling into the slough of dullness. On the other hand, the author, as it happens, appears to be as little interested in his human flock as we are. What he really cares about is the intellectual apathy of the English and their gross credulity to shams and humbug. The pivot of this conviction is the old quarrel between Rationalism and the Church. It is an old-fashioned arena, and the combatants are rather ghostly nowadays. But Mr. Swift burnishes up their rusty armor and sets them to it again with a rare will and energy.

One has often wondered what is the cardinal fault of the realistic method in fiction, and Mr. Ervine's novel perhaps supplies the answer. It is its impotence to make a generalization upon the record of experience. That may not sound very important, but, as a matter of fact, it points

the difference between a work of art and Hansard. In "Changing Winds," for instance, Henry Quinn, the hero (in the familiar manner), is carried through a laborious career from schooldays to marriage. He is an Ulsterman, but he might just as well come from Nova Zembla for all the impression we receive of his psychology. He makes three friends at school, and after a haphazard growth in Ireland, turns to writing novels (they generally do), and joins his friends in London. Then Henry becomes a kind of large barn in whom Mr. Ervine dumps contemporary events and personalities, as they occur. The unfortunate thing is that Henry and his friends are barns and not threshing-machines. They call themselves the Improved Tories, but the only definite improvement they appear to suggest is that the unemployed should be put into the Army. That process having already taken place, the matter is settled. Henry has a love affair with a novelistic enchantress, but the affair soon fizzles out. There is a little news about the Home Rule movement, the Ulster attitude, the sinking of the "Titanic" (which Mr. Ervine must call the "Gigantic"—we wonder why, on the same analogy he should not call Sir Horace Plunkett Sir Horace Junket), and the war. That is where we fall foul of Mr. Ervine's method. It is all news and nothing else. Being a semi-political novel, and only incidentally and conventionally one of character, it proceeds at great length to accumulate semi-political gossip, and to trail out a quite average opinion about it. Only once, when the author makes a strong attack upon the Irish Rebellion, is an inert series of hazy and rather shallow impressions arrested for a more definite and virile one. But have we no right to demand something more than a loosely and heavily constructed chronicle, a rag-bag of "man-in-the street" impressions, from a writer who possesses something more than popular reputation?

### The Week in the City.

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Working Expenses, &c. ... ..	2,806,400	3,075,122	3,110,060	4,480,500
	853,374	1,003,553	1,347,551	2,339,752
Brought Forward, and Sundry Receipts ... ..	152,213	149,331	191,964	162,088
	1,005,587	1,152,884	1,539,515	2,501,840
Interest, &c. ... ..	122,293	121,155	138,097	228,108
Depreciation ... ..	443,637	550,472	559,063	1,470,177
Insurance and Reserve ... ..	188,528	154,506	482,573	250,000
Preference Dividend ... ..	56,750	56,750	56,750	135,000
Ordinary Dividend... ..	64,002	128,004	140,744	267,080
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